IT MOANS ON LAND AND SEA

and other Welsh tales from

THE SPIRIT WORLD

MAGICAL CREATURES — A WEISER BOOKS COLLECTION

WIRT SIKES

It Moans on Land and Sea and Other Welsh Tales from the Spirit World

Wirt Sikes

Varla Ventura

Magical Creatures

A Weiser Books Collection

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Things That Go Bump in the Night

Draw the shades closed. You'll want no light save a single candle flicker. If no candle is available, you may choose to read this by moonlight. You are about to enter the spirit realm, the world of creatures of the dark of the night. Lock the doors and if you haven't already, shut the windows—although these acts may prove fruitless if they are already in your house. These creatures lurk: they hide behind the cupboard doors, under the stairs, and beneath the hydrangea in your garden. They live in cellars and puddles and tree stumps. They build shacks on the edge of the forest and huddle in wait beneath the bridge you are forced to cross.

It isn't often that a collector of ghostly tales such as myself finds stories that truly make my toes curl. Such was the case with this frightening folklore you are about to read. Taken from a volume of forgotten lore, *It Moans on Land and Sea* is a terrifying romp into the deep dark world of the spirits. Excerpted from the larger volume originally published as *British Goblins: Welsh Folk-lore, Fairy Mythology, Legends and Tradition*, you would be surprised how the land of the fae and the land of the dead intersect. When I first stumbled upon this 1880 publication by Wirt Sikes, I assumed it would be fairy tales à la Hans Christian Andersen or the Brothers Grimm. Little did I know that I would find not only a collection of accounts amassed under the headings of Goblins and Fairies, but also that there would be further sections on ghosts, ghost hunting, and other miscellaneous creatures of superstition and belief.

William Wirt Sikes (1836—1883) was a writer and journalist appointed to be the U.S. consul at Cardiff, Wales in 1876. It was there that he undertook the studying and preservation of Welsh folklore and history, and also became acquainted with those things that go bump in the night. Sikes lived in Wales at the end of his life (and died there). I like to picture him sharing a spot of tea with an old grandmother who tells him a tale from her mother's mother. Or perhaps he is smoking a pipe with an old farmer who has seen with his own eyes some of the creatures who inhabit these pages and knows “for a fact” that the stories are true.

In Sikes's own words, he makes an attempt to classify these creatures from beyond the veil into six main categories:

1. Departed Mortals
2. Goblin Animals
3. Spectres of Natural Objects
4. Grotesque Ghosts
5. Familiar Spirits
6. Death Omens

Séances, haunted houses, an evil tailor, Dogs from Hell, demons, goblins, wraiths . . . all are creeping about within these pages, as they once freely lurked throughout the hills of Wales. Consider them locked away inside a chest, scratching at the lid with an enchanting and horrifying earnestness you cannot resist. You have the key in the palm of your hand, and trembling, decide to open the chest and at last free these ghoulish beings. For better or for worse, their moans and whispers, clambering chains and gurgling cries will be part of your psyche from here on out. That is, if you dare read on.

In Freakitude,

Varla Ventura

San Francisco, 2011

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BOOK II.

THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

Where the wan spectres walk eternal rounds.

—Pope.

Miranda. What is't? a spirit? Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, sir, It carries a brave form:—But 'tis a spirit.

SHAKSPEARE: *Tempest*.

CHAPTER I.

Modern Superstition regarding Ghosts—American ‘Spiritualism’—Welsh Beliefs—Classification of Welsh Ghosts—Departed Mortals—Haunted Houses—Lady Stradling's Ghost—The Haunted Bridge—The Legend of Catrin Gwyn—Didactic Purpose in Cambrian Apparitions—An Insulted Corpse—Duty-performing Ghosts—Laws of the Spirit-World—Cadogan's Ghost.

I.

In an age so given to mysticism as our own, it is unnecessary to urge that the Welsh as a people are not more superstitious regarding spirits than other peoples. Belief in the visits to earth of disembodied spirits is common to all lands. There are no doubt differences in the degree of this belief, as there are differences in matters of detail. Where or how these spirits exist are questions much more difficult to the average faith than why they exist. They exist for the moral good of man; of this there prevails no doubt. The rest belongs to the still unsettled science of the Unknowable. That form of mysticism called ‘spiritualism’ by its disciples is dignified to the thoughtful observer by being viewed as a remnant of the primeval philosophy. When we encounter, in wandering among the picturesque ghosts of the Welsh spirit-world, last-century stories displaying details exactly similar to those of modern spiritualism, our interest is strongly aroused. The student of folk-lore finds his materials in stories and beliefs which appear to be of a widespread family, rather than in stories and beliefs which are unique; and the spirit of inquiry is constantly on the alert, in following the details of a good old ghost story, however fascinating it may be in a poetic sense. The phantoms of the Welsh spirit-world are always picturesque; they are often ghastly; sometimes they are amusing to the point of risibility; but besides, they are instructive to him whose purpose in studying is, to know.

That this age is superstitious with regard to ghosts, is not wonderful; all ages have been so; the wonder is that this age should be so and yet be the possessor of a scientific record so extraordinary as its own. An age which has brought forth the magnetic telegraph, steamships and railway engines,

sewing-machines, mowing-machines, gas-light, and innumerable discoveries and inventions of marvellous utility—not to allude to those of our own decade—should have no other use for ghostology than a scientific one. But it would be a work as idle as that of the Coblynau themselves, to point out how universal among the most civilised nations is the superstition that spirits walk. The ‘controls’ of the modern spiritualistic seance have the world for their audience. The United States, a land generally deemed—at least by its inhabitants—to be the most advanced in these directions of any on God's footstool, gave birth to modern spiritualism. Its disciples there compose a vast body of people, respectable and worthy people in the main (as the victims of superstition usually are), among whom are many men of high intellectual ability. With the masses, some degree of belief in the spirits is so nearly universal that I need hardly qualify the adjective. In a country where there is practically no such class as that represented in Europe by the peasantry, the rampancy of such a belief is a phenomenon deserving close and curious study. The present work affords no scope for this study, of course. But I may here mention in further illustration of my immediate theme, the constant appearance, in American communities, of ghosts of the old-fashioned sort. Especially in the New England states, which are notable for their enlightenment, are ghost-stories still frequent—such as that of the haunted school-house at Newburyport, Mass., where a disembodied spirit related its own murder; of the ghost of New Bedford, which struck a visitor in the face, so that he yet bears the marks of the blow; of the haunted house at Cambridge, in the classic shadow of Harvard College. It is actually on record in the last-named case, that the house fell to decay on account of its ghastly reputation, as no one would live in it; that a tenant who ventured to occupy it in 1877 was disturbed by the spirit of a murdered girl who said her mortal bones were buried in his cellar; and that a party of men actually dug all night in that cellar in search of those bones, while the ghost waltzed in a chamber overhead. The more common form of spirit peculiar to our time appears constantly in various parts of the country; it is continually turning up in the American newspapers, rapping on walls, throwing stones, tipping over tables, etc. ‘Mediums’ of every grade of shrewdness and stupidity, and widely differing degrees of education and ignorance, flourish abundantly. Occasionally, where revelations of murder have been made to a mortal by a spirit, the police have taken the matter in

hand. It is to be observed as a commendable practice in such cases, that the mortal is promptly arrested by the police if there has really been a murder; and when the fact appears, as it sometimes does, that the mortal had need of no ghost to tell him what he knows, he is hanged.

II.

The Welsh dearly love to discuss questions of a spiritual and religious nature, and there are no doubt many who look upon disbelief herein as something approaching paganism. That one should believe in God and a future life, and yet be utterly incredulous as to the existence of a mundane spirit-world, seems to such minds impossible. It is not many years since the clergy taught a creed of this sort. One must not only believe in a spiritual existence, but must believe in that existence here below—must believe that ghosts walked, and meddled, and made disagreeable noises. Our friend the Prophet Jones taught this creed with energy. In his relation of apparitions in Monmouthshire, he says: 'Enough is said in these relations to satisfy any reasonable sober-minded person, and to confute this ancient heresy, now much revived and spreading, especially among the gentry, and persons much estranged from God and spiritual things; and such as will not be satisfied with things plainly proved and well designed; are, in this respect, no better than fools, and to be despised as such. . . . They are chiefly women and men of weak and womanish understandings, who speak against the accounts of spirits and apparitions. In some women this comes from a certain proud fineness, excessive delicacy, and a superfine disposition which cannot bear to be disturbed with what is strange and disagreeable to a vain spirit.' Nor does the Prophet hesitate to apply the term ‘Sadducees’ to all doubters of his goblins. His warrant for this is found in Wesley and Luther. That Luther saw apparitions, or believed he did, is commonly known. Wesley's beliefs in this direction, however, are of a nearer century, and strike us more strangely; though it must be said that the Prophet Jones, in our own century, believed more than either of his eminent prototypes. ‘It is true,’ wrote Wesley, ‘that the English in general, and indeed most of the men in Europe, have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions as mere old wives’ fables. I am sorry for it, and I willingly take this opportunity of entering my solemn protest against this violent compliment which so many that believe the

Bible pay to those who do *not* believe it. . . . They well know, whether Christians know it or not, that the giving up witchcraft is, in effect, giving up the Bible. And they know, on the other hand, that if but one account of the intercourse of men with separate spirits be admitted, their whole castle in the air—deism, atheism, materialism—falls to the ground.'

III.

The ghosts of Wales present many well-defined features. It is even possible to classify them, after a fashion. Of course, as with all descriptions of phantoms, the vagueness inevitable in creatures of the imagination is here; but the ghosts of Welsh tradition are often so old, and have been handed down so cleanly through successive generations, that in our day they have almost acquired definite outlines, as in the case of images arising from the perceptions. Always bearing in mind the risk of being lost in the labyrinthine eccentricities of popular fancy, compared to which the Arsinoë of Herodotus was unperplexing, I venture to classify the inhabitants of the Welsh spirit-world thus: 1. Departed Mortals; 2. Goblin Animals; 3. Spectres of Natural Objects; 4. Grotesque Ghosts; 5. Familiar Spirits; 6. Death Omens.

IV.

The ghosts of departed mortals are usually the late personal acquaintances of the people who see them. But sometimes they are strangers whom nobody knows, and concerning whom everybody is curious. Two such ghosts haunted the streets of Ebbw Vale, in Glamorganshire, in January, 1877. One was in the shape of an old woman, the other in that of a girl child. Timid people kept indoors after nightfall, and there were many who believed thoroughly in the ghostly character of the mysterious visitors. Efforts were made to catch them, but they eluded capture. It was hinted by materialists that they were thieves; by unbelievers in spiritualism that they had perhaps escaped from a seance in some adjoining town. These ghosts, however, are not very interesting. A cultivated moderner can have no satisfaction in forming the acquaintance of a seance ghost; it is quite otherwise in the case of a respectable old family goblin which has haunted a friend's house in the most orthodox manner for centuries. Such ghosts are numerous in Wales, and quite

faithfully believed in by selected individuals. Indeed one of the highest claims to a dignified antiquity that can be put in by a Welsh family mansion, is the possession of a good old-fashioned blood-curdling spectre—like that, for example, which has haunted Duffryn House, a handsome stone manse near Cardiff, for the past two hundred years and more. This is the ghost of the doughty admiral Sir Thomas Button, famed in his day as an Arctic navigator. Since his death he has faithfully haunted (so the local farm folk say) the cellar and the garden of Duffryn House, where he lived, when he did live, which was in the 17th century. He has never been known to appear in hall or chamber of the mansion, within the memory of man, but has been seen hovering over the beer butt or tun in the cellar, commemorated in his name, and walking in the flower-garden of a fine windy night.

It is noteworthy that in Wales it is by no means necessary that a house should be tenantless, mortally speaking, merely because a ghost haunts it. The dreary picture of desolation drawn by Hood, the all-sufficient explanation of which was—

. . . the place is haunted!

would not recall the smug tidiness of Duffryn House, whose clean-cut lawns and well-trimmed hedges are fit surroundings of a mansion where luxurious comfort reigns. A ghost which confines itself to the cellar and the garden need disturb neither the merrymaking nor the slumbers of the guests.

St. Donat's Castle is down on the southern coast of Glamorganshire, in a primitive region not yet profaned by railroads, nor likely to be perhaps for many years to come. It is owned and inhabited by a worthy gentleman whose ancestors for seven centuries sleep in the graveyard under the old castle wall. Its favourite ghost—for to confine this or any other ancient Welsh castle to a single ghost would be almost disrespectful—is that of Lady Stradling, who was done away with by some of her family in those wicked old times when families did not always dwell in peace together. This ghost makes a practice of appearing when any mishap is about to befall a member of the house of Stradling—the direct line of which is, however, extinct, a fact not very well apprehended among the neighbouring peasantry. She wears high-heeled shoes and a long trailing gown of the finest silk. In this guise doth she wander up and down the

long majestic halls and chambers, and, while she wanders, the castle hounds refuse to rest, but with their howlings raise all the dogs of the village under the hill.

V.

Ghosts of this sort are vague and purposeless in character, beyond a general blood-curdling office which in all ghosts doth dwell. They haunt not only castles and family mansions, but bridges, rocks, and roads, objectless but frightful. The ghost of Pont Cwnca Bach, near Yscanhir, in Carmarthenshire, frightens people off the bridge into the rivulet. Many belated peasants have had this dire experience at the little bridge, afterwards wandering away in a dazed condition, and finding themselves on recovering at some distance from home, often in the middle of a bog. In crossing this bridge people were seized with ‘a kind of *cold dread*,’ and felt ‘a peculiar sensation’ which they could not describe, but which the poorest fancy can no doubt imagine. Another purposeless spectre exists in the legend of Catrin Gwyn, told in Cardiganshire. The ruin of a shepherd's cottage, standing on a mountain waste near the river Rheidol, is the haunt of this spectre. A peasant who was asked to escort a stranger up the narrow defile of rocks by the ruin, in horror exclaimed, ‘Yn enw y daioni, peidiwch,’ (in the name of heaven, sir, don't go!) ‘or you'll meet White Catti of the Grove Cave.’ ‘And what's that?’ ‘An evil spirit, sir.’ And the superstitious peasant would neither be laughed nor reasoned out of his fears. Catrin was the bride of a young shepherd living near Machynlleth in 1705. One day she went to market with a party of other peasants, who separated from her on the return way at a point two miles from Gelli Gogo. She was never more seen alive. A violent storm arose in the night, and next day a scrap of her red cloak was found on the edge of a frightful bog, in which she is believed to have disappeared in the darkness and storm. The husband went mad; their cottage fell to decay; and to this day the shepherds declare that Catti's ghost haunts the spot. It is most often seen, and in its most terrific shape, during howling storms, when it rides on the gale, shrieking as it goes.

VI.

Few Cambrian spirits are devoid of a didactic purpose. Some teach reverence for the dead,—a lesson in great request among the rising generation in Wales and elsewhere. The church at Tregaron, Cardiganshire, was being rebuilt in 1877, and certain skulls were turned up by the diggers in making new foundations. The boys of Tregaron amused themselves playing ball with the skulls, picking out their teeth, banging them against the wall to see if they would break, and the like. They probably never heard the story told by Mrs. Morgan of Newport to the Prophet Jones: of some people who were drinking at an inn there, ‘two of them officers of excise,’ when one of the men, to show his courage, declared he was afraid of no ghosts, and dared go to the charnel house and fetch a skull from that ghastly place. This bold and dangerous thing he did, and the men debated, over their beer, whether it was a male or a female skull, and concluded it was a woman's, ‘though the grave nearly destroys the difference between male and female before the bones are turned to dust, and the difference then quite destroyed and known only to God.’ After a jolly hour over the skull, the bold one carried it back and left it where he got it; but as he was leaving the church, suddenly a tremendous blast like a whirlwind seized him, and so mauled and hauled him that his teeth chattered in his head and his knees knocked together, and he ever after swore that nothing should tempt him to such a deed again. He was still more convinced that the ghost of the original owner of the skull had been after him, when he got home, and his wife told him that his cane, which hung in the room, had been beating against the wall in a dreadful manner.

VII.

As a rule, the motive for the reappearance on earth of a spirit lately tenanting a mortal body, is found in some neglected duty. The spirit of a suicide is morally certain to walk: a reason why suicides are so unpopular as tenants of graveyards. It is a brave man who will go to the grave of a suicide and play ‘Hob y deri dando’ on the ysturmant (jew's-harp), without missing a note. Many are the tales displaying the motive, on the ghost's part, of a duty to perform—sometimes clearly defining it, sometimes vaguely suggesting it, as in the story of Noe. 'The evening was far gone when a traveller of the name of Noe arrived at an inn in Pembrokeshire,

and called for refreshment. After remaining some time he remarked that he must proceed on his journey. “Surely,” said the astonished landlord, “you will not travel at night, for it is said that a ghost haunts that road, crying out, The days are long and the nights are cold to wait for Noe.” “O, I am the man sought for,” said he, and immediately departed; but strange to say, neither Noe nor the ghost was ever heard of afterwards.'

The ghost of a weaver, which appeared to Walter John Harry, had a very clear idea of the duty he must perform: Walter John Harry was a Quaker, a harmless, honest man, and by trade a farrier, who lived in the romantic valley of Ebwy Fawr. The house he lived in was haunted by the ghost of Morgan Lewis, a weaver, who had died in that house. One night, while lying awake in his bed, with his wife sleeping by his side, Harry saw a light slowly ascending the stairs, and being somewhat afraid, though he was naturally a fearless man, strove to awake his wife by pinching her, but could not awake her. So there he lay in great fear, and with starting eyes beheld the ghost of the weaver come up the stairs, bearing a candle in its hand, and wearing a white woollen cap on its head, with other garments usual to the weaver when alive. The ghost came near the farrier's bed, who then mustered up courage to speak to it. ‘Morgan Lewis,’ said Harry, ‘why dost thou walk this earth?’ The ghost replied with great solemnity, that its reason for so doing was that there were some ‘bottoms of wool’ hidden in the wall of this house, and until these said bottoms were removed from the wall it could not sleep. The ghost did not say this wool had been stolen, but such was the inference. However, the harmless farrier spoke severely to the ghost, saying, ‘I charge thee, Morgan Lewis, in the name of God, that thou trouble my house no more.’ Whereupon the ghost vanished, and the house ceased thereafter to be haunted.

The motives animating ghosts are much the same the world over, and these details have no greater novelty than that of the local colouring. European peoples are familiar with the duty-compelled ghost; but it is odd to encounter the same spectre in China. The most common form of Chinese ghost-story is that wherein the ghost seeks to bring to justice the murderer who shuffled off its mortal coil. The ghosts of suicides are also especially obnoxious there. The spectres which are animated by a sense of duty are more frequently met than any others: now they seek to serve virtue in distress, now they aim to restore wrongfully-held treasure.

VIII.

The laws governing the Welsh spirit-world are clear and explicit. A ghost on duty bent has no power of speech until first spoken to. Its persistency in haunting is due to its eager desire to speak, and tell its urgent errand, but the person haunted must take his courage in both hands and put the question to the issue. Having done so, he is booked for the end of the business, be it what it may. The mode of speech adopted must not vary, in addressing a spirit; in the name of the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost it must be addressed, and not otherwise. Its business must be demanded; three times the question must be repeated, unless the ghost answer earlier. When it answers, it speaks in a low and hollow voice, stating its desire; and it must not be interrupted while speaking, for to interrupt it is dangerous in the extreme. At the close of its remarks, questions are in order. They must be promptly delivered, however, or the ghost will vanish. They must bear on the business in hand: it is offended if asked as to its state, or other idle questions born of curiosity. Neglect to obey the ghost's injunctions will lead to much annoyance, and eventually to dire results. At first the spirit will appear with a discontented visage, next with an angry one, and finally with a countenance distorted with the most ferocious rage. Obedience is the only method of escape from its revenge. Such is a *resumé* of the laws. The illustrations thereof are generally consistent in their details.

The story of Cadogan's ghost is one of many in kind. Thomas Cadogan was the owner of a large estate in the parish of Llanvihangel Llantarnam, and being a covetous man did wickedly remove his landmarks in such a way as to absorb to himself part of the land of a widow his neighbour. After his death this injustice troubled him, and as a certain woman was going home one night, at a stile she passed over she met Cadogan's ghost. By a strange forgetfulness, this woman for the moment lost sight of the fact that Cadogan was now a ghost; she had momentarily forgotten that Cadogan was dead. ‘Mr. Cadogan,’ said she, with ungrammatical curiosity, ‘what does you here this time o' night?’ To which the ghost answered, ‘I was obliged to come.’ It then explained the matter of the landmarks, and begged the woman to request a certain person (whom it mentioned) to remove them back to their proper places; and then the ghost vanished. At this unexpected termination of the interview, the woman

suddenly recollected Cadogan's death, and fell into a state of extreme terror. She however did as the ghost had bidden her, and Cadogan walked no more.

CHAPTER II.

Household Ghosts and Hidden Treasures—The Miser of St. Donat's—Anne Dewy's Ghost—The Ghost on Horseback—Hidden Objects of Small Value—Transportation through the Air—From Breconshire to Philadelphia, Pa., in Thirty-Six Hours—Sir David Llwyd, the Magician—The Levitation of Walter Jones—Superstitions regarding Hares—The Legend of Monacella's Lambs—Aerial Transportation in Modern Spiritualism—Exorcising Household Ghosts—The Story of Haunted Margaret.

I.

The majority of stories of this class turn on the subject of hidden treasures. The popular belief is that if a person die while any hoarded money—or indeed metal of any kind, were it nothing more than old iron—is still hidden secretly, the spirit of that person cannot rest. Its perturbation can only be relieved by finding a human hand to take the hidden metal, and throw it down the stream of a river. To throw it up the stream, will not do. The Ogmore is the favourite river for this purpose in lower Glamorganshire. The spirit selects a particular person as the subject of its attentions, and haunts that person till asked what it wants, when it prefers its request. Some say it is only ill-gotten treasure which creates this disturbance of the grave's repose. A tailor's wife at Llantwit Major, who had been a stout and jolly dame, was thus haunted until she was worn to the semblance of a skeleton, ‘for not choosing to take a hoard honestly to the Ogmore.’ But flesh and blood could not resist for ever, and so—this is her story: ‘I at last consented, for the sake of quiet, to take the treasure to the river; and the spirit wafted me through the air so high that I saw below me the church loft, and all the houses, as if I leaned out of a balloon. When I took the treasure to throw it into the river, in my flurry I flung it up stream instead of down: and on this the spirit, with a savage look, tossed me into a whirlwind, and however I got back to my home I know not.' The bell-ringers found her lying insensible in the church lane, as they were going home from church late in the evening.

II.

There was an old curmudgeon of a money-hoarder who lived in a cottage on the side of the cwm, or dingle, at St. Donat's, not far from the Castle. His housekeeper was an antique dame of quaint aspect. He died, and the dame lived there alone; but she began to grow so gaunt and grizzly that people wondered at it, and the children ran frightened from her. Some one finally got from her the confession that she was haunted by the miser's ghost. To relieve her of its presence the Methodists resolved to hold a prayer-meeting in the haunted house. While they were there singing and praying the old woman suddenly jumped up and screamed, ‘There he is! there he is!’ The people grew silent. Then some one said, ‘Ask it what it wants.’ ‘What do you want?’ quavered the old woman. No one heard the reply, except the dame, who presently said: ‘Where is it?’ Then the old woman, nodding and staring as if obeying an invisible mandate, groped her way to the chimney, thrust her gaunt arm up, and drew down a bag of money. With this she cried out, ‘Let me go! let me go!’ which, no one preventing her, she did, as quickly as a flash of light. Some young men by the door followed her, and, it being a bright moonlight night, beheld her whisk over the stile without touching it, and so off up the road towards the Ogmore. The people now resumed their praying and singing. It was an hour before the old woman got back, and then she was found to be spattered with mud and bedraggled with wet, as if she had been having a terrific time. She had indeed, as she confessed, been to the Ogmore, and thrown the bag of money down the stream; the ghost had then taken off its hat, made a low bow, and vanished, to trouble her no more.

III.

A young man from Llywel parish, who was courting a lass who lodged at the house of Thomas Richard, in the vale of Towy, found himself haunted as he went to and fro by the ghost of Anne Dewy, a woman who had hanged herself. She would not only meet him in the road, and frighten him, but she would come to his bedside, and so scare him that he fell ill. While he was ill his cousin came to see him, and thinking his illness was due to his being crossed in love, rallied him, saying, ‘Wfft! thou'rt sick because thy cariad has refused thee.’ But being gravely answered, and told

of Anne Dewy's ghost, this cousin advised the haunted man to speak to her. ‘Speak to her,’ said he, ‘or thou wilt have no quiet. I will go with thee, and see thou shalt have no harm.’ So they went out, and called at Tafarn y Garreg, an inn not far off; but the haunted man could not drink, and often looked towards the door. ‘What ails the man?’ asked the tap-room loungers. He continued to be uneasy, and finally went out, his cousin following him, and then he saw the ghost again. ‘Oh God, here she is!’ he cried out, his teeth chattering and his eyes rolling. ‘This is a sad thing,’ said his cousin: ‘I know not what to think of thee; but come, I will go with thee, go where thou wilt.’ They returned to the ale-house, and after a while the haunted man started up, saying he was called, but when others offered to go with him he said no, he must go alone. He did go alone, and spoke to the ghost, who said, ‘Fear nothing; follow me.’ She led him to a spot behind the house where she had lived when in the flesh, and where she had hanged herself, and bade him take from the wall a small bag. He did so. The bag contained ‘a great sum of money,’ in pieces of gold; he guessed it might be 200/. or more. But the ghost, greatly to his regret, bade him go and cast it into the river. He obeyed, against his better judgment. The next day, and for many a day thereafter, people looked for that money where he had thrown it in the river, but it never could be found. The Rev. Thomas Lewis, a dissenting minister in those parts, saw the place in the wall where the money had been hid, in the haunted house, and wondered how the young man could reach it, it being so very high; but thought it likely he was assisted by the ghost.

IV.

This same Rev. Thomas Lewis was well acquainted with a man who was similarly employed by a perturbed spirit, and was at the man's bedside when he died. This ghost was in appearance a clergyman, dressed in black clothes, with a white wig on. As the man was looking out of an ale-house window one night, he saw this ghost on horseback, and went out to him. The ghost bowed and silently offered him drink; but this was declined. Thereupon the ghost lifted his hat, crooked his elbow, and said in a hollow tone, ‘Attoch chwi, syr,’ (towards you, sir). But others who were there could see nothing and hear nothing. The ghost then said, ‘Go to Clifford Castle, in Radnorshire, take out some money which lies hidden there, and

throw it into the river. Do this, I charge thee, or thou shalt have no rest.’ Further and more explicit directions were then given, and the unhappy man set out, against his will, for Clifford Castle, which is the castle in which was born Fair Rosamond, King Henry II.'s beautiful favourite. No one but himself was allowed to enter the castle, although he was permitted to have a friend's company to the ruined gate thereof. It was dark when they came to the castle, but he was guided to the place where the money was, and ran with it and flung it into the river. After that he was haunted no more.

An old house at Ty'n-y-Twr, in Carnarvonshire, was haunted by a ghost whose troubles were a reversal of the rule. A new tenant, who took possession of the house a few years ago, was so bothered by this spectre that he resolved to question it. He did so and got for answer the information that if he would deposit a particular sum of money in a specified place, his ghostship would cease to walk. The man actually did this, and it acted like magic. The money disappeared with promptitude, and the ghost came there no more.

A man at Crumlyn, Monmouthshire, was haunted by a ghost whose trouble related to a hidden object of small value. Nevertheless the spectre was so importunate that the man set out one night to accompany it to the scene of perturbation. In due time they came to a huge stone, which the ghost bade its friend lift up, who replied that he had not sufficient strength, it being a pretty large rock he was thus requested to move. ‘But try,’ said the ghost. So he tried, and lo! it was lifted as if it had been a feather. He drew forth a pike, or mattock; ‘and the light,’ the man afterwards related, ‘was as great as if the sun shone; and in the snow there was no impression of the feet of either of us.’ They went to the river, and by the ghost's command the man threw the pike over his head into the water, standing with his back to the flood. The ghost then conducted him home, and never troubled him more. But for a long time after he was out of his senses.

This was an illustration, according to the popular belief, of the wickedness of hiding anything, however trifling its value—a practice strongly condemned by the Welsh peasantry.

There is a Glamorganshire story about a certain young man who, returning late at night from courting his sweetheart, felt tired, and sitting down fell asleep. He had not slept long when he was aroused by a strange

noise, and looking up recognised the ghost of his departed grandfather. Enquiring the cause of the old gentleman's visit to this scene of trials, he got this answer: ‘Under the corner of the thatch of your roof, look and you will find a pair of silver spurs, surreptitiously obtained by me when in the flesh, and hidden there. Throw them into the river Taff, and I shall be at peace.’ The young man obeyed these instructions, and found the spurs accordingly; and although many persons were present when he climbed to the roof and fumbled under the thatch, and saw him in the very act, not one among them could see the spurs, which were to them invisible. They said, however, that when the purloined spurs had been thrown into the river, a bright flame was seen to flash along the water.

V.

A large proportion of these stories of ghostly perturbation concerning hidden treasure include a further feature of great interest, relating to transportation through the air. I have mentioned that ghosts sometimes employ the services of the fairy Boobach in thus carrying mortals from place to place. The fairies of Wales are indeed frequently found to be on the best of terms with the ghosts. Their races have much in common, and so many of their practices are alike that one is not always absolutely sure whether he is dealing with a fairy or a spectre, until some test-point crops up. However, in transporting a mortal through the air, ghost and fairy work together. The Boobach being set his task, complaisantly gives the mortal the choice of being transported above wind, amid wind, or below wind. The value of knowing beforehand what to expect, was never better illustrated than in this place. The mortal who, with a natural reluctance to get into an unpleasantly swift current, avoids travelling mid-wind, misses a pleasant journey, for mid-wind is the only agreeable mode of being borne by a Boobach. Should you choose to go above wind, you are transported so high that you skim the clouds and are in danger of being frightened to death. But choosing the below-wind course is even worse, for then you are dragged through bush, through briar, in a way to impress upon you the advice of Apollo to Phaeton, and teach you the value of the golden mean. *In medio tutissimus ibis.*

VI.

In the parish of Ystradgynlais, in Breconshire, Thomas Llewellyn, an innkeeper's son, was often troubled by the spirit of a well-dressed woman, who used to stand before him in narrow lanes, as if to bar his passage, but he always got by her, though in great alarm. One night he mustered up courage to speak to her, and ask her what she wanted with him. To which she replied, ‘Be not afraid; I will not hurt thee.’ Then she told him he must go to ‘Philadelphia in Pennsylvania,’ and take a box from a house there, (which she described,) in which there was a sum of 200/. But as he did not know how to go to that far-off place, he said as much. ‘Meet me here next Friday night,’ said the phantom; ‘meet me, I charge thee.’ She then vanished. The young man went home and told this story to his neighbours and friends. They held a consultation with the curate of the parish, who promptly appointed a prayer-meeting for that Friday night, to which the young man was bidden, and by which it was hoped the purpose of the ghost to spirit him off to Philadelphia might be circumvented. The meeting continued until midnight, and when it broke up the young man's friends stayed with him; but they had no sooner got beyond the parson's stables than he was taken from among them. His subsequent adventures are thus related by himself: ‘The apparition carried me away to a river, and threw me into it, chiding me for telling the people of our appointed meeting and for not coming to meet her as she had charged me; but bade me be not afraid, that she would not hurt me, because she had not charged me to be silent on the subject; nevertheless I had done wrong to go to the parson's house. Now, said she, we begin the journey. I was then lifted up and carried away I know not how. When I came to the place,’ (in Philadelphia,) ‘I was taken into a house, and conducted to a fine room. The spirit then bade me lift up a board, which I did. I then saw the box, and took it. Then the spirit said I must go three miles and cast it into the black sea. We went, as I thought, to a lake of clear water, where I was commanded to throw the box into it; which when I did there was such a noise as if all about was going to pieces. From thence I was taken up and carried to the place where I was first taken up. I then asked her, Am I free now? She said I was; and then she told me a secret, which she strictly charged me to tell no person.’ Extensive and ingenious guessing was indulged in by all Ystradgynlais, as to what this secret might be; and one woman made herself popular by remembering that there was a certain Elizabeth Gething in other days who had gone from this neighbourhood to

Pennsylvania, and the conclusion was eagerly arrived at, that this was the woman whose phantom the young man saw, and that the secret she told him was her name when alive. They questioned him as to her appearance, and he said she was largely made, very pale, her looks severe, and her voice hollow, different from a human voice. This was considered by the Ystradgynlaisians, with many nods to each other, as a most accurate description of what Elizabeth Gething would probably be, after having shuffled off this mortal coil. The time occupied in this mysterious transportation and ghostly enterprise was three days and three nights; that is, from Friday night to Monday night; and when the voyager came home he could scarcely speak.

VII.

Sir David Llwyd, the Welsh magician, was once at Lanidloes town, in Montgomeryshire, and as he was going home late at night, saw a boy there from his neighbourhood. He asked the lad if he would like to ride home behind him, and receiving an affirmative reply, took the boy up behind on the horse's back. They rode so swiftly that they were home in no time, and the boy lost one of his garters in the journey. The next day, seeing something hanging in the ash-tree near the church, he climbed up to learn what it was, and to his great surprise found it was the garter he had lost. ‘Which shows they rode home in the air,’ observes the Prophet Jones in telling the story. Mr. Jones has a number of extraordinary narratives of this class—e.g., the following, which I condense:

Henry Edmund, of Hafodafel, was one night visiting Charles Hugh, the conjuror of Aberystruth, and they walked together as far as Lanhiddel, where Hugh tried to persuade his companion to stay all night with him at a public house. Edmund refused, and said he would go home. ‘You had *better* stay,’ said Hugh in a meaning tone. But Edmund went out into the street, when he was seized by invisible hands and borne through the air to Landovery, in Carmarthenshire, a distance of fully fifty miles as the crow flies. There he was set down at a public house where he had before been, and talked with people who knew him. He then went out into the street, when he was seized again and borne back to Lanhiddel, arriving there the next morning at daybreak. The first man he met was the conjuror Charles Hugh, who said, ‘Did I not tell you you had better stay with me?’

VIII.

The landlord of the inn at Langattock Crickhowel, in Breconshire, was a man called Richard the Tailor. He was more than suspected of resorting to the company of fairies, and of practising infernal arts. One day a company of gentlemen were hunting in that vicinity, when the hounds started a hare, which ran so long and so hard that everybody was prostrated with fatigue; and this hare disappeared from view at the cellar window of the inn kept by Richard the Tailor. The circumstance begat a suspicion among the hunters that the hare which had so bothered them was none other than Richard the Tailor himself, and that his purpose in taking that form had been to lead them a dance and bring them to the door of his inn at an hour too late for them to return home, thus compelling them to spend their money there. They stayed, however, being very tired. But they growled very hard at their landlord and were perfectly free with their comments on his base conduct. One of their party, having occasion to go out-doors during the evening, did not come back; his name was Walter Jones, and he was well known in that part of the country. The company became uneasy at his absence, and began to abuse the landlord roundly, threatening to burn the house if Walter Jones did not return. Notwithstanding their threats, Walter Jones came not back all night. Late the next morning he made his appearance, looking like one who had been drawn through thorns and briars, with his hair in disorder, and his whole aspect terribly demoralised. His story was soon told. He had no sooner got out-doors than invisible hands had whisked him up, and whirled him along rough ways until daybreak, when he found himself near by the town of Newport, helping a man from Risca to raise a load of coal upon his horse. Suddenly he became insensible, and was whisked back again to the inn where they now saw him. The distance he traversed in going to and fro was about forty miles. And Walter Jones, who had hitherto been an ungodly man, mended his ways from that time forth.

IX.

There are many points in all these traditional stories which are suggestive of interesting comparisons, and constantly remind us of the significance of details which, at first sight, seem trivial. The supposed

adoption of the hare form by the tailor recalls a host of mythological details. The hare has been identified with the sun-god Michabo of the American Indians, who sleeps through the winter months, and symbolises the sleep of nature precisely as in the fairy myth of the Sleeping Maiden, and the Welsh legends of Sleeping Heroes. Among the Hottentots, the hare figures as the servant of the moon. In China, the hare is viewed as a telluric genius in one province, and everywhere as a divine animal. In Wales, one of the most charming of the local legends relates how a hare flying from the hounds took refuge under a fair saint's robes, so that hares were ever after called Monacella's Lambs in that parish. Up to a comparatively recent time, no person in the parish would kill a hare. When a hare was pursued by dogs, it was firmly believed that if any one cried, ‘God and St. Monacella be with thee,’ it was sure to escape. The legend is related by Pennant, in his tour through Montgomeryshire: ‘At about two miles distant from Llangynog, I turned up a small valley to the right, to pay my devotions to the shrine of St. Monacella, or, as the Welsh style her, Melangell. . . . She was the daughter of an Irish monarch, who had determined to marry her to a nobleman of his court. The princess had vowed celibacy. She fled from her father’s dominions, and took refuge in this place, where she lived fifteen years without seeing the face of man. Brochwel Yscythrog, prince of Powys, being one day a hare-hunting, pursued his game till he came to a great thicket; when he was amazed to find a virgin of surprising beauty engaged in deep devotion, with the hare he had been pursuing under her robe, boldly facing the dogs, who retired to a distance, howling, notwithstanding all the efforts of the sportsmen to make them seize their prey. When the huntsman blew his horn, it stuck to his lips. Brochwel heard her story, and gave to God and her a parcel of lands to be a sanctuary to all who fled there. He desired her to found an abbey on the spot. She did so, and died abbess of it, in a good old age. She was buried in the neighbouring church. . . . Her hard bed is shown in the cleft of a neighbouring rock. Her tomb was in a little chapel, or oratory, adjoining to the church and now used as a vestry-room. This room is still called cell y bedd, (cell of the grave). . . . The legend is perpetuated by some rude wooden carvings of the saint, with numbers of hares scuttling to her for protection.'

X.

It is interesting to observe, in connection with the subject of transportation through the air, with what vitality this superstition lingers in modern spiritualism. The accounts of such transportation are familiar to every reader of newspapers. That Mr. Home was seen, by a learned English nobleman, sailing through the moonlight seventy feet from the ground, is on record; that Mrs. Guppy was transported from Highbury Park to Lamb's Conduit Street, in London, in a trance and a state of partial *déshabille,* is also on record; and that a well-known American spiritualist was borne by invisible hands from Chicago to Milwaukee and back, between midnight and 4 A.M., I have been assured by a number of persons in Illinois who thoroughly believed it, or said they did. But it certainly is not too much to demand, that people who give credence to these instances of aerial transportation should equally believe in the good old ghost stories of the Welsh. The same consistency calls for credulity as to the demoniacal elevation of Simon Magus, and the broomstick riding of the witches whose supernatural levitation was credited by Lord Bacon and Sir Matthew Hale, not to speak of Addison and Wesley.

There is something peculiarly fascinating to the gross denizens of earth in this notion of skimming like a bird over house-tops. No dreams, save those of love and dalliance, are so charming to the dreamer as visions of flying; to find oneself floating along over the tops of trees, over the streets where less favoured mortals walk, to look down on them as they stroll, is to feel an exquisite pleasure. The mind of childhood and that of ignorance, alike unable to discriminate between reality and illusion, would naturally retain the impression of such a dream with peculiar vividness. The superstition has no doubt been fostered by this fact, although it, like most superstitions, began its career in pre-historic days. The same class of belief attaches to the magical lore of widely separated lands, in all ages. The magic carpet of the Arabian Nights finds its parallel to-day in the enchanted mat of the Chinese conjuror, which carries him from place to place, at a height of twenty or thirty feet in the air. The levitation involved is in Welsh story embodied in the person of Sgilti Yscawndroed; when he was sent on a message through the wood he went along the tops of the trees; in his whole life, a blade of reed grass never bent beneath his feet, so light was his tread.

XI.

It remains but to add, in connection with our household ghosts, that the method of exorcising such goblins in Wales is explicit. The objectionable spectre must be conjured, in the name of Heaven, to depart, and return no more. Not always is this exorcism effective; the ghost may have a specific purpose in hand, or it may be obstinate. The strength of the exorcism is doubled by employing the Latin language to deliver it; it receives its utmost power, however, through the clergy; three clergymen, it is thought, will exorcise any ghost that walks. The exorcism is usually for a stated period; seven years is the favourite time; one hundred years the limit. There are many instances where a ghost which had been laid a hundred years returned at the end of the time to its old haunts. In all cases it is necessary the ghost should agree to be exorcised; no power can lay it if it be possessed of an evil demon—a spirit within a spirit, as it were—which stubbornly refuses to listen to argument. In such cases the terrors of Heaven must be rigorously invoked; but the result is only temporary. Properly constituted family ghosts, however, will lend a reasonable ear to entreaty, backed by prayer. There are even cases on record where the ghost has been the entreater, as in the story of Haunted Margaret.

Haunted Margaret, or Marget yr Yspryd, was a servant-girl who lived in the parish of Panteg. She had been seduced by a man who promised to marry her, and a day was set for their wedding; but when the day came, the man was not on hand, and Margaret thereupon fell on her knees in the church and prayed Heaven that her seducer might have no rest either in this world or in the world to come. In due course the man died, and immediately his ghost came to haunt Margaret Richard. People heard her in the night saying to the ghost, ‘What dost thou want?’ or ‘Be quiet, let me alone;’ and hence it was that she came to be known in that parish by the nickname of Marget yr Yspryd. One evening when the haunted woman was at the house of Mrs. Hercules Jenkins, at Trosdra, she began to be uneasy, and as it grew late said, ‘I must go now, or else I shall be sure to meet him on the way home.’ Mrs. Jenkins advised Margaret to speak to him; ‘and tell him thou dost forgive him,’ said the good dame. Margaret went her way, and as she drew near a stile at the end of a foot-bridge, she saw the ghost at the stile waiting for her. When she came up to it the ghost said, ‘Do thou forgive me, and God will forgive thee. Forgive me and I shall be at rest, and never trouble thee any more.’ Margaret then forgave him, and he shook hands with her in a friendly way, and vanished.

CHAPTER III.

Spectral Animals—The Chained Spirit—The Gwyllgi, or Dog of Darkness—The Legend of Lisworney-Crossways—The Gwyllgi of the Devil's Nags—The Dog of Pant y Madog—Terrors of the Brute Creation at Phantoms—Apparitions of Natural Objects—Phantom Ships and Phantom Islands.

I.

Of spectral animals there is no great diversity in Cambria, unless one should class under this head sundry poetic creatures which more properly belong to the domain of magic, or to fairyland. The spirits of favourite animals which have died return occasionally to visit their masters. Sometimes it is a horse, which is seen on a dark night looking in at the window, its eyes preternaturally large. More often it is the ghost of a dog which revisits the glimpses of the moon. Men sometimes become as fondly attached to a dog as they could to any human being, and, where the creed of piety is not too severe, the possibility of a dog's surviving after death in a better world is admitted. ‘It is hard to look in that dog's eyes and believe,’ said a Welshman to me, ‘that he has not a bit of a soul to be saved.’ The almost human companionship of the dog for man is a familiar fact. It is not strange, therefore, that the dog should be the animal whose spirit, in popular belief, shares the nature of man's after death.

II.

Sometimes the spirit in animal form is the spirit of a mortal, doomed to wear this shape for some offence. This again trenches on the ground of magic; but the ascription to the spirit-world is distinct in modern instances. There was a Rev. Mr. Hughes, a clergyman of the Church of England, in the isle and county of Anglesea, who was esteemed the most popular preacher thereabout in the last century, and upon this account was envied by the rest of the clergy, ‘which occasioned his becoming a field preacher for a time, though he was received into the Church again.’ As he was going one night to preach, he came upon an artificial circle in the ground,

between Amlwch village and St. Elian Church, where a spirit in the shape of a large greyhound jumped against him and threw him from his horse. This experience was repeated on a second night. The third night he went on foot, and warily; and now he saw that the spirit was chained. He drew near, but keeping beyond the reach of the chain, and questioned the spirit: ‘Why troublest thou those that pass by?’ The spirit replied that its unrest was due to a silver groat it had hidden under a stone when in the flesh, and which belonged to the church of St. Elian. The clergyman being told where the groat was, found it and paid it over to the church, and the chained spirit was released.

III.

In the Gwyllgi, or Dog of Darkness, is seen a spirit of terrible form, well known to students of folk-lore. This is a frightful apparition of a mastiff, with a baleful breath and blazing red eyes which shine like fire in the night. It is huge in size, and reminds us of the ‘shaggy mastiff larger than a steed nine winters old,’ which guarded the sheep before the castle of Yspaddaden Pencawr. ‘All the dead trees and bushes in the plain he burnt with his breath down to the very ground.’ The lane leading from Mousiad to Lisworney-Crossways, is reported to have been haunted by a Gwyllgi of the most terrible aspect. Mr. Jenkin, a worthy farmer living near there, was one night returning home from market on a young mare, when suddenly the animal shied, reared, tumbled the farmer off, and bolted for home. Old Anthony the farm-servant, found her standing trembling by the barn-door, and well knowing the lane she had come through suspected she had seen the Gwyllgi. He and the other servants of the farm all went down the road, and there in the haunted lane they found the farmer, on his back in the mud. Being questioned, the farmer protested it was the Gwyllgi and nothing less, that had made all this trouble, and his nerves were so shaken by the shock that he had to be supported on either side to get him home, slipping and staggering in the mud in truly dreadful fashion all the way. It is the usual experience of people who meet the Gwyllgi that they are so overcome with terror by its unearthly howl, or by the glare of its fiery eyes, that they fall senseless. Old Anthony, however, used to say that he had met the Gwyllgi without this result. As he was coming home from courting a young woman of his acquaintance (name delicately withheld, as

he did not marry her) late one Sunday night—or it may have been Monday morning—he encountered in the haunted lane two large shining eyes, which drew nearer and nearer to him. He was dimly able to discern, in connection with the gleaming eyes, what seemed a form of human shape above, but with the body and limbs of a large spotted dog. He threw his hat at the terrible eyes, and the hat went whisking right through them, falling in the road beyond. However, the spectre disappeared, and the brave Anthony hurried home as fast as his shaking legs would carry him.

As Mr. David Walter, of Pembrokeshire, ‘a religious man, and far from fear and superstition,’ was travelling by himself through a field called the Cot Moor, where there are two stones set up called the Devil's Nags, which are said to be haunted, he was suddenly seized and thrown over a hedge. He went there another day, taking with him for protection a strong fighting mastiff dog. When he had come near the Devil's Nags there appeared in his path the apparition of a dog more terrible than any he had ever seen. In vain he tried to set his mastiff on; the huge beast crouched frightened by his master's feet and refused to attack the spectre. Whereupon his master boldly stooped to pick up a stone, thinking that would frighten the evil dog; but suddenly a circle of fire surrounded it, which lighting up the gloom, showed the white snip down the dog's nose, and his grinning teeth, and white tail. ‘He then knew it was one of the infernal dogs of hell.’

Rebecca Adams was ‘a woman who appeared to be a true living experimental Christian, beyond many,’ and she lived near Laugharne Castle, in Carmarthenshire. One evening when she was going to Laugharne town on some business, her mother dissuaded her from going, telling her she would be benighted, and might be terrified by some apparition at Pant y Madog. This was a pit by the side of the lane leading to Laugharne, which was never known to be dry, and which was haunted, as many had both seen and heard apparitions there. But the bold Rebecca was not to be frighted at such nonsense, and went her way. It was rather dark when she was returning, and she had passed by the haunted pit of Pant y Madog, and was congratulating herself on having seen no ghost. Suddenly she saw a great dog coming towards her. When within about four or five yards of her it stopped, squatted on its haunches, ‘and set up such a scream, so loud, so horrible, and so strong, that she thought the

earth moved under her.’ Then she fell down in a swoon. When she revived it was gone; and it was past midnight when she got home, weak and exhausted.

IV.

Much stress is usually laid, in accounts of the Gwyllgi, on the terror with which it inspires domestic animals. This confidence in the ability of the brute creation to detect the presence of a spirit, is a common superstition everywhere. An American journal lately gave an account of an apparition seen in Indiana, whose ghostly character was considered by the witnesses to be proven by the terror of horses which saw it. They were drawing the carriage in which drove the persons to whom the ghost appeared, and they shied from the road at sight of it, becoming unmanageable. The spectre soon dissolved in thin air and vanished, when the horses instantly became tractable. In Wales it is thought that horses have peculiarly this ‘gift’ of seeing spectres. Carriage horses have been known to display every sign of the utmost terror, when the occupants of the carriage could see no cause for fright; and in such cases a funeral is expected to pass there before long, bearing to his grave some person not dead at the time of the horses' fright. These phenomena are certainly extremely interesting, and well calculated to ‘bid us pause,’ though not, perhaps, for the purpose of considering whether a horse's eye can receive an image which the human retina fails to accept. Much weight will not be given to the fright of the lower animals, I fear, by any thoughtful person who has witnessed the terror of a horse at sight of a flapping shirt on a clothes-line, or that hideous monster a railway engine. Andrew Jackson Davis has a theory that we all bear about us an atmosphere, pleasing or repulsive, which can be detected by horses, dogs, and spiritual ‘mediums;’ this *aura*, being spiritual, surrounds us without our will or wish, goes where we go, but does not die when we die, and is the means by which a bloodhound tracks a slave, or a fond dog finds its master. Without denying the possibility of this theory, I must record that in my observation a dog has been found to smell his master most successfully when that master was most in need of a bath and a change of linen. Also, that when the master leaves off his coat he clearly leaves—if a dog's conduct be evidence—a part of his *aura* with it. More worthy of serious attention is August Comte's suggestion that dogs and

some other animals are perhaps capable of forming fetichistic notions. That dogs accredit inanimate objects with volition, to a certain extent, I am quite convinced. The thing which constitutes knowledge, in dogs as in human beings—that is to say, thought, organised by experience—corrects this tendency in animals as they grow older, precisely as it corrects the false conclusions of children, though never to the same extent. That a dog can think, I suppose no well-informed person doubts in these days.

V.

The Gwyllgi finds its counterpart in the Mauthe Doog of the Isle of Man and the Shock of the Norfolk coast. It there comes up out of the sea and travels about in the lanes at night. To meet it is a sign of trouble and death. The Gwyllgi also is confined to sea-coast parishes mainly, and although not classed among death-omens, to look on it is deemed dangerous. The hunting dogs, Cwn Annwn, or dogs of hell, whose habitat is the sky overhead, have also other attributes which distinguish them clearly from the Gwyllgi. They are death-omens, ancient of lineage and still encountered. The Gwyllgi, while suggesting some interesting comparisons with the old mythology, appears to have lost vogue since smuggling ceased to be profitable.

VI.

Confined to the coast, too, are those stories of phantom ships and phantom islands which, too familiar to merit illustration here, have their origin in the mirage. That they also touch the ancient mythology is undoubted; but their source in the mirage is probably true of the primeval belief as well as of the medieval, and that of our time. The Chinese also have the mirage, but not its scientific explanation, and hence of course their belief in its supernatural character is undisturbed.

CHAPTER IV.

Grotesque Ghosts—The Phantom Horseman—Gigantic Spirits—The Black Ghost of Ffynon yr Yspryd—Black Men in the Mabinogion—Whirling Ghosts—Antic Spirits—The Tridoll Valley Ghost—Resemblance to Modern Spiritualistic Performances—Household Fairies.

I.

The grotesque ghosts of Welsh folk-lore are often most diverting acquaintances. They are ghosts on horseback, or with coloured faces, or of huge and monstrous form; or they indulge in strange gymnastics, in whirling, throwing stones, or whistling. A phantom horseman, encountered by the Rev. John Jones, of Holywell, in Flintshire, as described by himself, is worthy of Heinrich Zschokke. This Mr. Jones was a preacher of extraordinary power, renowned and respected throughout Wales. He was one day travelling alone on horseback from Bala, in Merionethshire, to Machynlleth, Montgomeryshire, and as he approached a forest which lay in his way he was dogged by a murderous-looking man carrying a sharp sickle. The minister felt sure this man meditated an attack on his life, from his conduct in running crouched along behind hedges, and from his having met the man at the village inn of Llanuwchllyn, where the minister exposed his watch and purse. Presently he saw the man conceal himself at a place where the hedge was thick, and where a gate crossed the road; and feeling sure that here he should be attacked, he stopped his horse to reflect on the situation. No house was in sight, and the road was hidden by high hedges on either side. Should he turn back? ‘In despair, rather than in a spirit of humble trust and confidence,’ says the good man, ‘I bowed my head, and offered up a silent prayer. At this juncture my horse, growing impatient of the delay, started off. I clutched the reins, which I had let fall on his neck, when, happening to turn my eyes, I saw, to my utter astonishment, that I was no longer alone: there, by my side, I beheld a horseman in a dark dress, mounted on a white steed. In intense amazement I gazed upon him. Where could he have come from? He appeared as suddenly as if he had sprung from the earth; he must have

been riding behind and have overtaken me, and yet I had not heard the slightest sound. It was mysterious, inexplicable; but joy overcame my feelings of wonder, and I began at once to address my companion. I asked him if he had seen any one, and then described to him what had taken place, and how relieved I felt by his sudden appearance. He made no reply, and on looking at his face he seemed paying but slight attention to my words, but continued intently gazing in the direction of the gate, now about a quarter of a mile ahead. I followed his gaze, and saw the reaper emerge from his concealment and run across a field to our left, resheathing his sickle as he hurried along. He had evidently seen that I was no longer alone, and had relinquished his intended attempt.' Seeking to converse with the mysterious horseman, the minister found the phantom was speechless. In vain he addressed it in both Welsh and English; not a word did it utter, save that once the minister thought it said ‘Amen,’ to a pious remark. Suddenly it was gone. 'The mysterious horseman was gone; he was not to be seen; he had disappeared as mysteriously as he had come. What could have become of him? He could not have gone through the gate, nor have made his horse leap the high hedges, which on both sides shut in the road. Where was he? had I been dreaming? was it an apparition —a spectre, which had been riding by my side for the last ten minutes? was it but a creature of my imagination? I tried hard to convince myself that this was the case; but why had the reaper resheathed his murderous-looking sickle and fled? And then a feeling of profound awe began to creep over my soul. I remembered the singular way of his first appearance, his long silence, and the single word to which he had given utterance after I had mentioned the name of the Lord; the single occasion on which I had done so. What could I then believe but that . . . in the mysterious horseman I had a special interference of Providence, by which I was delivered from a position of extreme danger?’

II.

Of gigantic ghosts there are many examples which are very grotesque indeed. Such was the apparition which met Edward Frank, a young man who lived in the parish of Llantarnam. As he was coming home one night he heard something walking towards him, but at first could see nothing. Suddenly his way was barred by a tall dismal object which stood in the

path before him. It was the ghost of a marvellous thin man, whose head was so high above the observer's line of vision that he nearly fell over backward in his efforts to gaze at it. His knees knocked together and his heart sank. With great difficulty he gasped forth, ‘In the name of God what is here? Turn out of my way or I will strike thee!’ The giant ghost then disappeared, and the frightened Edward, seeing a cow not far off, went towards her to lean on her, which the cow stood still and permitted him to do. The naïveté of this conclusion is convincing.

Equally prodigious was the spectre seen by Thomas Miles Harry, of the parish of Aberystruth. He was coming home by night from Abergavenny, when his horse took fright at something which it saw, but which its master could not see. Very much terrified, the latter hastened to guide the animal into an adjoining yard, and dismount; whereupon he saw the apparition of a gigantic woman. She was so prodigiously tall, according to the account of the horrified Harry, that she was fully half as high as the tall beech trees on the other side of the road; and he hastened to hide from his eyes the awful sight, by running into the house, where they listened open-mouthed to his tale. Concerning this Mr. Harry we are assured that he was of an affable disposition, innocent and harmless, and the grandfather of that eminent and famous preacher of the Gospel, Thomas Lewis, of Llanharan, in Glamorganshire. The same narrator relates that Anne, the daughter of Herbert Jenkins, of the parish of Trefethin, ‘a young woman well disposed to what is good,’ was going one evening to milk the cows by Rhiw-newith, when as she passed through a wood she saw a horrible black man standing by a holly tree. She had with her a dog, which saw it also, and ran towards it to bark at it, upon which it stretched out a long black tongue, and the dog ran affrighted back to the young woman, crawling and cringing about her feet for fear. She was in great terror at all this, but had the courage still to go on after the cows, which had strayed into another field. She drove them back to their own field, and in passing the holly-tree avoided looking that way for fear of seeing the black man again. However, after she had got safely by she looked back, and saw the monster once more, ‘very big in the middle and narrow at both ends,’ and as it walked away the ground seemed to tremble under its heavy tread. It went towards a spring in that field called Ffynon yr Yspryd, (the Fountain of the Spirit,) where ghosts had been seen before, and crossing over the stile into the common way, it whistled so loud and strong that the narrow valley echoed and re-echoed

with the prodigious sound. Then it vanished, much to the young woman's relief.

III.

That giants should appear in the Welsh spirit-land will surprise no one, but the apparition of black men is more unique. The Mabinogion, however, are full of black men, usually giants, always terrible to encounter. The black man whom Peredur slew had but one eye, having lost the other in fighting with the black serpent of the Carn. ‘There is a mound, which is called the Mound of Mourning; and on the mound there is a carn, and in the carn there is a serpent, and on the tail of the serpent there is a stone, and the virtues of the stone are such, that whosoever should hold it in one hand, in the other he will have as much gold as he may desire. And in fighting with this serpent was it that I lost my eye.’ In the ‘Lady of the Fountain’ mabinogi the same character appears: ‘a black man . . . not smaller in size than two of the men of this world,’ and with ‘one eye in the middle of his forehead.’ And there are other black men in other Mabinogion, indicating the extremely ancient lineage of the spectre seen by Anne Jenkins at the Fountain of the Spirit. Whatever Anglo-Saxon scoffers may say of Welsh pedigrees of mere flesh and blood, the antiquity of its spectral hordes may not be disputed. The black giant of Sindbad the Sailor and the monster woodward of Cynan alike descend from the Polyphemus blinded by Odysseus.

IV.

Another grotesque Welsh goblin goes whirling through the world. Three examples are given by the Prophet Jones. *First:* Lewis Thomas, the father of the Rev. Thomas Lewis, was on his return from a journey, and in passing through a field near Bedwellty, saw this dreadful apparition, to wit, the spectre of a man walking or whirling along on its hands and feet; at sight of which Lewis Thomas felt his hair to move on his head; his heart panted and beat violently, ‘his body trembled, and he felt not his clothes about him,’ *Second:* John Jenkins, a poor man, who lived near Abertillery, hanged himself in a hay-loft. His sister soon after came upon his dead body there hanging, and screamed loudly. Jeremiah James, who lived in Abertillery House, hearing the scream, looked in that direction and saw the

‘resemblance of a man’ coming from the hay-loft ‘and violently turning upwards and downwards topsy turvy’ towards the river, ‘which was a dreadful sight to a serious godly man.’ *Third:* Thomas Andrew, living at a place called The Farm, in the parish of Lanhiddel, coming home late at night saw a whirling goblin on all fours by the side of a wall, which fell to scraping the ground and wagging its head, ‘looking aside one way and the other,’ making at the same time a horrible mowing noise; at which Thomas Andrew ‘was terribly frightened.’

V.

The antics of these and similar inhabitants of the Cambrian spirit-world at times outdo the most absurd capers of modern spiritualism. At the house of a certain farmer in the parish of Llanllechid, in Carnarvonshire, there was great disturbance by a spirit which threw stones into the house, and from one room to another, which hit and hurt the people who lived there. The stones were of various sizes, the largest weighing twenty-seven pounds. Most of them were river stones, from the stream which runs hard by. Some clergymen came from Bangor and read prayers in the house, to drive the spirit away, but their faith was not strong enough, and stones were thrown at them, so that they retired from the contest. The family finally had to abandon the house.

On the farm of Edward Roberts, in the parish of Llangunllo, in Radnorshire, there was a spirit whose antics were somewhat remarkable. As the servant-man was threshing, the threshel was taken out of his hand and thrown upon the hay-loft. At first he did not mind this so much, but when the trick had been repeated three or four times he became concerned about it, and went into the house to tell of it. The master of the house was away, but the wife and the maid-servant laughed at the man, and merrily said they would go to the barn to protect him. So they went out there and sat, the one to knit and the other to wind yarn. They were not there long before their things were taken from their hands and tumbled about the barn. On returning to the house, they perceived the dishes on the shelves move to and fro, and some were thrown on to the stone floor and broken. That night there was a terrible clattering among the dishes, and next morning they could scarcely tread without stepping on the wrecks of crockery which lay about. This pleasant experience was often repeated.

Neighbours came to see. People even came from far to satisfy their curiosity—some from so far as Knighton; and one who came from Knighton to read prayers for the exorcising of the spirit, had the book taken out of his hand and thrown upstairs. Stones were often cast at the people, and once iron was projected from the chimney at them. At last the spirit set the house on fire, and nothing could quench it; the house was burnt down: nothing but the walls and the two chimneys stood, long after, to greet the eyes of people who passed to and from Knighton market.

VI.

A spirit which haunted the house of William Thomas, in Tridoll Valley, Glamorganshire, used to hit the maid-servant on the side of her head, as it were with a cushion, when she was coming down the stairs. ‘One time she brought a marment of water into the house,’ and the water was thrown over her person. Another time there came so great an abundance of pilchards in the sea, that the people could scarcely devour them, and the maid asked leave of her master to go and fetch some of them. ‘No,’ said he, being a very just man, ‘the pilchards are sent for the use of poor people; we do not want them.’ But the maid was very fond of pilchards, and so she went without leave, and brought some to the house. After giving a turn about the house, she went to look for her fish, and found them thrown out upon the dunghill. ‘Well,’ said her master, ‘did not I tell thee not to go?’ Once a pot of meat was on the fire, and when they took it off they found both meat and broth gone, none knew where, and the pot as empty as their own bellies. Sometimes the clasped Bible would be thrown whisking by their heads; and ‘so it would do with the gads of the steller, and once it struck one of them against the screen where a person then sat, and the mark of it still to be seen in the hard board.’ Once the china dishes were thrown off the shelf, and not one broke. ‘It was a great business with this light-hating spirit to throw an old lanthorn about the house without breaking it.’ When the maid went a-milking to the barn, the barn-door would be suddenly shut upon her as she was milking the cow; then when she rose up the spirit began to turn the door backwards and forwards with an idle ringing noise. Once it tried to make trouble between the mistress and the maid by strewing charcoal ashes on the milk. When William Evans, a neighbour, went there to pray, as he knelt by the bedside, it struck

the bed such a bang with a trencher that it made a report like a gun, so that both the bed and the room shook perceptibly. On another occasion, it made a sudden loud noise, which made the master think his house was falling down, and he was prodigiously terrified; it never after that made so loud a noise.

The Rev. R. Tibbet, a dissenting minister from Montgomeryshire, was one night sleeping in the house, with another person in the bed with him; and they had a tussle with the Tridoll spirit for possession of the bed-clothes. By praying and pulling with equal energy, the parson beat the spirit, and kept the bed-clothes. But the spirit, apparently angered by this failure, struck the bed with the cawnen (a vessel to hold grain) such a blow that the bed was knocked out of its place. Then they lit a light and the spirit left them alone. It was a favourite diversion with this goblin to hover about William Thomas when he was shaving, and occasionally cuff him on the side of his head—the consequence being that the persecuted farmer shaved himself by fits and starts, in a very unsatisfactory manner, and in a most uncomfortable state of mind. For about two years it troubled the whole of that family, during which period it had intervals of quiet lasting for a fortnight or three weeks. Once it endeavoured to hinder them from going to church, by hiding the bunch of keys, on the Lord's day, so that for all their searching they could not find them. The good man of the house bade them not to yield to the devil, and as they were loth to appear in their old clothes at meeting, they were about to break the locks; but first concluded to kneel in prayer, and so did. After their prayers they found the keys where they used to be, but where they could not find them before. One night the spirit divided the books among the members of the family, after they had gone to bed. To the man of the house it gave the Bible, to the woman of the house ‘Allen's Sure Guide,’ and upon the bed of the maid-servant (whom it was specially fond of plaguing) it piled a lot of English books, which language she did not understand. The maid was heartily afraid of the spirit, and used to fall on her knees and go to praying with chattering teeth, at all hours of the day or night; and prayer this spirit could not abide. When the maid would go about in the night with a candle, the light thereof would diminish, grow feeble as if in dampness, and finally go out. The result was the maid was generally excused from making journeys into cellar or garret after dark, very much to her satisfaction.

Particularly did this frisky Tridoll spirit trouble the maid-servant after she had gone to bed—in winter hauling the bed-clothes off her; in summer piling more on her. Now there was a young man, a first cousin to William Thomas, who could not be got to believe there was a spirit at his kinsman's house, and said the family were only making tricks with one another, ‘and very strong he was, a hero of an unbeliever, like many of his brethren in infidelity.’ One night William Thomas and his wife went to a neighbour's wake, and left the house in charge of the doubting cousin, who searched the place all over, and then went to bed there; and no spirit came to disturb him. This made him stronger than ever in his unbelief. But soon after he slept there again, when they were all there, and before going to bed he said aloud to the maid, ‘If anything comes to disturb thee, Ally, call upon me, as I lie in the next room to you.’ During the night the maid cried out that the spirit was pulling the clothes off her bed, and the doubting cousin awoke, jumped out of bed, and ran to catch the person he believed to be playing tricks with the maid. But there was no creature visible, although there rained upon his doubting head a series of cuffs, and about his person a fusillade of kicks, which thrust the unbelief quite out of him, so that he doubted no more. The departure of this spirit came about thus: William Thomas being in bed with his wife, heard a voice calling him. He awaked his wife, and rising on his elbow said to the invisible spirit, ‘In the name of God what seekest thou in my house? Hast thou anything to say to me?’ The spirit answered, ‘I have,’ and desired him to remove certain things out of a place where they had been mislaid. ‘Satan,’ answered William Thomas, in a candid manner, ‘I'll do nothing thou biddest me; I command thee, in the name of God, to depart from my house.’ And it obeyed.

VII.

This long and circumstantial account, which I have gathered from different sources, but mainly from the two books of the Prophet Jones, will impress the general reader with its resemblance, in many respects, to modern newspaper ghost stories. The throwing about of dishes, books, keys, etc.; its raps and touches of the person; its making of loud noises by banging down metal objects; all these antics are the tricks of contemporaneous spiritualism. But this spectre is of a date when our spiritualism was quite unknown. The same is true of the spirit which threw

stones, another modern spiritualistic accomplishment. [75] The spiritualists will argue from all this that their belief is substantiated, not by any means that it is shaken. The doubter will conclude that there were clever tricksters in humble Welsh communities some time before the American city of Rochester had produced its ‘mediums.’

The student of comparative folk-lore, in reading these accounts, will be equally impressed with their resemblance to phenomena noted in many other lands. The conclusion is irresistible that we here encounter but another form of the fairy which goes in Wales by the name of the Bwbach, and in England is called the Hobgoblin, in Denmark the Nis, in Scotland the Brownie. Also, the resemblance is strong in all stories of this class to certain of the German Kobolds. In several of these accounts of spirits in Wales appear the leading particulars of the Kobold Hinzelmann, as condensed by Grimm from Feldman's long narrative. There is also a close correspondence to certain ghost stories found in China. In the story of Woo, from the ‘Che-wan-luk,’ appear details much like those in Hinzelmann, and equally resembling Welsh particulars, either in the stories given above, or those which follow. But we are now drawn so near to the division of Familiar Spirits that we may as well enter it at once.

[75] For the sake of comparison, I give the latest American case which comes under my notice. The scene is Akron, a bustling town in the State of Ohio; the time October, 1878. ‘Mr. and Mrs. Michael Metzler, middle-aged Germans, with their little daughter, ten years of age, and Mrs. Knoss, Metzler's mother-in-law, recently moved to a brick house in the suburbs known as Hell's Half Acre. The house is a good, substantial building, situated in a somewhat open space, and surrounded by a lonesome deserted air. A few days after they had moved, they were disturbed by sharp rappings all over the house, produced by small stones or pebbles thrown against the window panes. Different members of the family were hit by these stones coming to and going from the house. Other persons were hit by them, the stones varying in size from a pea to a hen's egg. Mrs. Metzler said that when she went after the cow in the evening, she could hear these stones whistling around her head. Mr. and Mrs. Metzler, who are devout Catholics, had Father Brown come to the house to exorcise the spirits which were tormenting them. The reverend father, in the midst of

his exercises, was struck by a stone, and so dismayed thereby that he went home in despair.’ (Newspaper account.)

CHAPTER V.

Familiar Spirits—The Famous Sprite of Trwyn Farm—Was it a Fairy?—The Familiar Spirits of Magicians—Sir David Llwyd's Demon—Familiar Spirits in Female Form—The Legend of the Lady of the Wood—The Devil as a Familiar Spirit—His Disguises in this Character—Summoning and Exorcising Familiars—Jenkin the Pembrokeshire Schoolmaster—The Terrible Tailor of Glanbran.

I.

Innumerable are the Welsh stories of familiar spirits. Sometimes these are spectres of the sort whose antics we have just been observing. More often they are confessedly demons, things of evil. In numberless cases it is no less a personage than the diawl himself who makes his appearance in the guise of a familiar spirit. The familiar spirit which takes up its abode in the household is, as we have seen, a pranksome goblin. Its personal appearance—or rather its invisibility—is the saving circumstance which prevents it from being deemed a fairy. The familiar spirit which haunted the house of Job John Harry, at the Trwyn Farm, in the parish of Mynyddyslwyn, was a stone-thrower, a stroker of persons, etc., but could not be seen. It is famous in Wales under the cognomen of Pwca'r Trwyn, and is referred to in my account of the Ellylldan. The tenants at present residing on the Trwyn Farm are strangers who have recently invaded the home of this ancestral spook, but I was able to glean abundant information concerning it from people thereabout. It made a home of Mr. Harry's house some time in the last century, for a period beginning some days before Christmas, and ending with Easter Wednesday, on which day it departed. During this time it spoke, and did many remarkable things, but was always invisible. It began at first to make its presence known by knocking at the outer door in the night; but when persons went to open the door there was no one there. This continued for some time, much to the perplexity of the door-openers. At last one night it spoke to the one who opened the door, and the family were in consequence much terrified. Some of the

neighbours, hearing these tales, came to watch with the family; and Thomas Evans foolishly brought a gun with him, ‘to shoot the spirit,’ as he said. But as Job John Harry was coming home that night from a journey, the familiar spirit met him in the lane and said, ‘There is a man come to your house to shoot me, but thou shalt see how I will beat him.’ So Job went on to the house, and immediately stones were thrown at the unbelieving Thomas who had brought the gun, stones from which he received severe blows. The company tried to defend him from the stones, which did strike and hurt him, and no other person; but their efforts were in vain. The result was, that Thomas Evans took his gun and ran home as fast as his legs would carry him, and never again engaged in an enterprise of that sort.

As this familiar spirit got better acquainted with its quarters, it became more talkative, and used often to speak from out of an oven by the hearth's side. It also took to making music o' nights with Job's fiddle. One night as Job was going to bed, the familiar spirit gave him a gentle stroke on the toe. ‘Thou art curious in smiting,’ said Job. ‘I can smite thee where I please,’ replied the spirit. As time passed on the family became accustomed to their ghostly visitor, and seeing it never did them any harm, but on the contrary was a source of recreation to them, they used to boldly speak to it, and indulge in entertaining conversation. One old man, a neighbour, more bold than wise, hearing the spirit just by his side, but being unable to see it, threatened to stick it with his knife. ‘Thou fool,’ quoth the spirit, ‘how canst thou stick what thou canst not see with thine eyes?’ When questioned about its antecedents, the spirit said, ‘I came from Pwll y Gasseg’ (Mare's Pit, a place in the adjacent mountain), ‘and I knew ye all before I came hither.’ The wife of Morris Roberts desired one of the family to ask the spirit who it was that killed William Reilly the Scotchman; which being done, the spirit said, ‘It was Blanch y Byd who bade thee ask that question;’ and Blanch y Byd (Worldly Blanche) was Morris Roberts' wife ever after called. On Easter Wednesday the spirit departed, saying, ‘Dos yn iach, Job,’ (fare thee well, Job,) and Job asked the spirit, ‘Where goest thou?’ The reply was, ‘Where God pleases.’[79]

There are other accounts of this Trwyn sprite which credit it to a time long anterior to last century; but all are consistent in this, that the goblin is always invisible. The sole exception to this rule is the legend about its

having once shown a white hand to some girls in the kitchen, thrusting it through the floor of its room overhead for that purpose. Now invisibility is a violation of fairy traditions, while ghosts are very often invisible—these rapping and stone-throwing ghosts, always. It might be urged that this spirit was a Bwbach, if a fairy at all, seeing that it kept pretty closely to the house; but on the whole I choose to class it among the inhabitants of the spirit-world; and really, the student of folk-lore must classify his materials distinctly in some understandable fashion, or go daft.

[79]Let me recommend the scene of this story to tourists. It is a most romantic spot, on the top of a mountain, a glorious tramp from Crumlyn, returning by another road to Abercarne. Wheels cannot go there, though a sure-footed horse might bear one safely up. The ancient farm-house is one of the quaintest in Wales, and must be hundreds of years old; and its front porch looks out over a ravine hardly less grand and lonely than a Californian gulch.

II.

The sort of familiar spirit employed by magicians in the eighteenth and preceding centuries was distinctly a demon. The spirit of this class which was controlled by Sir David Llwyd is celebrated in Wales. This Sir David was a famous dealer in the black art, who lived in Cardiganshire. He was a physician, and at one time a curate; but being known to deal in the magic art, he was turned out of the curacy, and obliged to live by practising physic. It was thought he learned the magic art in Oxford. ‘It was this man's great wickedness,’ says the Prophet Jones, 'to make use of a familiar spirit. . . . The bishop did well in turning him out of the sacred office, though he was no ill-tempered man, for how unfit was such a man to read the sacred Scripture! With what conscience could he ask the sponsors in baptism to undertake for the child to renounce the world, the flesh and the devil, who himself was familiar with one of the spirits of darkness?. . . Of this Sir David I have heard much, but chiefly depend upon what was told to me by the Rev. Mr. Thomas Lewis, the curate of Landdw and Tolachdy, an excellent preacher of the gospel; and not sufficiently esteemed by his people, (which likely will bring a judgment on them in time to come.) Mr. Lewis knew the young woman who had been Sir David's maid servant, and the house where he lived.' His familiar spirit he kept locked up in a

book. Once while he was in Radnorshire, in going from one house to another he accidentally left this book behind him, and sent his boy back to fetch it. The boy, being of an inquisitive turn of mind, opened the book—a thing his master had expressly charged him not to do—and the familiar spirit immediately demanded to be set at work. The boy, though very much alarmed, had the wit to answer, ‘Tafl gerrig o'r afon,’ (throw stones out of the river,) which the spirit immediately did, so that the air was for a time full of flying stones, and the boy was fain to skip about in a surprisingly active manner in order to dodge the same. After a while, having thrown up a great quantity of stones out of the river, (the Wye,) the spirit again, with the pertinacity of its kind, asked for something to do; whereupon the boy bade it throw the stones back again, which it did. Sir David having waited a long time for the boy to return, began to suspect that things had gone wrong, and so hastened back after him, and commanded the familiar spirit again into his book.

III.

Familiar spirits of this class are not always invisible; and they can assume such forms as may be necessary to serve their purposes. A favourite shape with them is that of a young and lovely woman. Comparisons are here suggested with the water-maidens, and other like forms of this fancy; but they need not be pursued. It is necessary for the student of phantoms to constantly remind himself of the omnipresent danger of being enticed too far afield, unless he keep somewhat sternly to the path he has marked out. How ancient is the notion of a familiar spirit in female form, may be seen from accounts which are given by Giraldus and other old writers. Near Caerleon, (Monmouthshire,) in the twelfth century, Giraldus tells us there lived 'a Welshman named Melerius, who by the following means acquired the knowledge of future events and the occult sciences: Having on a certain night met a damsel whom he loved, in a pleasant and convenient place, while he was indulging in her embraces, instead of a beautiful girl he found in his arms a hairy, rough and hideous creature, the sight of which deprived him of his senses; and after remaining many years in this condition he was restored to health in the church of St. David's, through the merits of its saints. But having always had an extraordinary familiarity with unclean spirits, by seeing them,

knowing them, talking with them, and calling each by his proper name, he was enabled through their assistance to foretell future events; he was indeed often deceived (as they are) with respect to circumstances at a great distance; but was less mistaken in affairs which were likely to happen soon, or within the space of a year. They appeared to him on foot, equipped as hunters, with horns suspended from their necks, and truly as hunters not of animals but of souls; he particularly met them near monasteries and religious places; for where rebellion exists there is the greatest need of armies and strength. He knew when any one spoke falsely in his presence, for he saw the devil as it were leaping and exulting upon the tongue of the liar; and if he looked into a book faultily or falsely written, although wholly illiterate he would point out the place with his finger. Being questioned how he could gain such knowledge, he said he was directed by the demon's finger to the place.' In the same connection Giraldus mentions a familiar spirit which haunted Lower Gwent, ‘a demon incubus, who from his love for a certain young woman, and frequenting the place where she lived, often conversed with men, and frequently discovered hidden things and future events.’

IV.

The legend of the Lady of the Wood is contained in the Iolo MSS., and is of considerable antiquity. It is a most fascinating tale: Einion, the son of Gwalchmai, ‘was one fine summer morning walking in the woods of Treveilir,’ when 'he beheld a graceful slender lady of elegant growth, and delicate feature, and her complexion surpassing every white and red in the morning dawn and the mountain snow, and every beautiful colour in the blossoms of wood, field, and hill. And then he felt in his heart an inconceivable commotion of affection, and he approached her in a courteous manner, and she also approached him in the same manner; and he saluted her, and she returned his salutation; and by these mutual salutations he perceived that his society was not disagreeable to her. He then chanced to cast his eye upon her foot, and he saw that she had hoofs instead of feet, and he became exceedingly dissatisfied,' as well he might. But the lady gave him to understand that he must pay no attention to this trifling freak of nature. ‘Thou must,’ she said, ‘follow me wheresoever I go, as long as I continue in my beauty.’ The son of Gwalchmai thereupon

asked permission to go and say good-bye to his wife, at least. This the lady agreed to; ‘but,’ said she, ‘I shall be with thee, invisible to all but thyself.’ 'So he went, and the goblin went with him; and when he saw Angharad, his wife, he saw her a hag like one grown old, but he retained the recollection of days past, and still felt extreme affection for her, but he was not able to loose himself from the bond in which he was. “It is necessary for me,” said he, “to part for a time, I know not how long, from thee, Angharad, and from thee, my son, Einion,” and they wept together, and broke a gold ring between them; he kept one half and Angharad the other, and they took their leave of each other, and he went with the Lady of the Wood, and knew not where; for a powerful illusion was upon him, and he saw not any place, or person, or object under its true and proper appearance, excepting the half of the ring alone. And after being a long time, he knew not how long, with the goblin, the Lady of the Wood, he looked one morning as the sun was rising upon the half of the ring, and he bethought him to place it in the most precious place he could, and he resolved to put it under his eyelid; and as he was endeavouring to do so, he could see a man in white apparel, and mounted on a snow-white horse, coming towards him, and that person asked him what he did there; and he told him that he was cherishing an afflicting remembrance of his wife Angharad. “Dost thou desire to see her?” said the man in white. “I do,” said Einion, “above all things, and all happiness of the world.” “If so,” said the man in white, “get upon this horse, behind me;” and that Einion did, and looking around he could not see any appearance of the Lady of the Wood, the goblin, excepting the track of hoofs of marvellous and monstrous size, as if journeying towards the north. “What delusion art thou under?” said the man in white. Then Einion answered him and told everything how it occurred 'twixt him and the goblin. “Take this white staff in thy hand,” said the man in white, and Einion took it. And the man in white told him to desire whatever he wished for. The first thing he desired was to see the Lady of the Wood, for he was not yet completely delivered from the illusion. And then she appeared to him in size a hideous and monstrous witch, a thousand times more repulsive of aspect than the most frightful things seen upon earth. And Einion uttered a cry of terror; and the man in white cast his cloak over Einion, and in less than a twinkling Einion alighted as he wished on the hill of Treveilir, by his own house, where he knew scarcely any one, nor did any one know him.' The

goblin meantime had gone to Einion's wife, in the disguise of a richly apparelled knight, and made love to her, pretending that her husband was dead. ‘And the illusion fell upon her; and seeing that she should become a noble lady, higher than any in Wales, she named a day for her marriage with him. And there was a great preparation of every elegant and sumptuous apparel, and of meats and drinks, and of every honourable guest, and every excellence of song and string, and every preparation of banquet and festive entertainment.’ Now there was a beautiful harp in Angharad's room, which the goblin knight desired should be played on; ‘and the harpers present, the best in Wales, tried to put it in tune, and were not able.’ But Einion presented himself at the house, and offered to play on it. Angharad, being under an illusion, ‘saw him as an old, decrepit, withered, grey-haired man, stooping with age, and dressed in rags.’ Einion tuned the harp, 'and played on it the air which Angharad loved. And she marvelled exceedingly, and asked him who he was. And he answered in song: . . . “Einion the golden-hearted.” . . .

“Where hast thou been!” “In Kent, in Gwent, in the wood, in Monmouth, In Maenol, Gorwenydd; And in the valley of Gwyn, the son of Nudd; See, the bright gold is the token.”

And he gave her the ring.

“Look not on the whitened hue of my hair, Where once my aspect was spirited and bold; Now gray, without disguise, where once it was yellow. Never was Angharad out of my remembrance, But Einion was by thee forgotten.”'

But Angharad 'could not bring him to her recollection. Then said he to the guests:

“If I have lost her whom I loved, the fair one of polished mind, The daughter of Ednyved Vychan, I have not lost (so get you out!) Either my bed, or my house, or my fire.”

'And upon that he placed the white staff in Angharad's hand, and instantly the goblin which she had hitherto seen as a handsome and honourable nobleman, appeared to her as a monster, inconceivably hideous; and she fainted from fear, and Einion supported her until she revived. And when she opened her eyes, she saw there neither the goblin, nor any of the guests, nor of the minstrels, nor anything whatever except

Einion, and her son, and the harp, and the house in its domestic arrangement, and the dinner on the table, casting its savoury odour around. And they sat down to eat . . . and exceeding great was their enjoyment. And they saw the illusion which the demoniacal goblin had cast over them. . . . And thus it ends.'

V.

There is hardly a goblin in the world more widely known than this spectre of the forest. Her story appears in the legends of very many lands, including China. Its ancient Grecian prototype is found in the Odyssey. [82]

When it is the Diawl himself who appears in the role of the familiar spirit, his majesty is usually in some other form than that of a man, with hoofs, horns, and tail. The orthodox form of Satan has indeed been seen in many parts of Wales, but not when doing duty as a familiar spirit. A Welsh poet of the thirteenth century mentions this form:

And the horned devil, With sharp hoofs On his heels.

He is variously called cythraul, dera, diafol, all euphemisms for devil, equivalent to our destroyer, evil one, adversary—as well as plain diawl, devil. In his character of a familiar spirit he assumes the shape of a fiery ball, a donkey, a black calf, a round bowl, a dog, a roaring flame, a bull, a goose, and numberless others, including the imp that goes into a book. In all this he bears out the character given him in old mythology, where he grows big or little at pleasure, and roars in a gale as Hermes, the wind-god, howls as a dog, enters a walnut as in the Norse Tale, or is confined in a bottle as the genie of the ‘Arabian Nights.’

To that eminent nonconformist preacher, Vavasor Powell, the devil once appeared in shape like a house. ‘Satan . . . appeared several times, and in several wayes, to me: as once like a house, stood directly in my way, with which sight I fell on my face as dead. . . . Another time, being alone in my chamber . . . I perceived a strong cold wind to blow . . . it made the hair of my flesh to stand up, and caused all my bones to shake; and on the suddain, I heard one walk about me, tramping upon the chamber floor, as if it had been some heavie big man . . . but it proved in the end to be no other than . . . Satan.’[84]

A black calf, which haunted a Pembrokeshire brook early in the present century, was believed to be the devil in familiar guise. It appeared at a certain spot near the village of Narberth—a village which has figured actively in mythic story since the earliest ages of which there is any record. One night two peasants caught the terrible calf and took it home, locking it up safely in a stable with some other cattle, but it had vanished when morning came.

Henry Llewelyn, of Ystrad Defoc parish, Glamorganshire, was beset by the devil in the shape of a round bowl. He had been sent by his minister (Methodist) to fetch from another parish a load of religious books—Bibles, Testaments, Watts' ‘Psalms, Hymns and Songs for Children’—and was coming home with the same, on horseback, by night, when he saw a living thing, round like a bowl, moving to and fro across the lane. The bold Llewelyn having concluded it was the devil, resolved to speak to it. ‘What seekest thou, thou foul thing?’ he demanded, adding, ‘In the name of the Lord Jesus go away!’ And to prove that it was the adversary, at these words it vanished into the ground, leaving a sulphurous smell behind.

To William Jones, a sabbath-breaker, of Risca village, the devil appeared as an enormous mastiff dog, which transformed itself into a great fire and made a roaring noise like burning gorse. And to two men at Merthyr Tydfil, in Glamorganshire, the fiend appeared in the shape of a gosling. These men were one night drinking together at the Black Lion Inn, when one dared the other to go to conjure. The challenge was accepted, and they went, but conducted their emprise with such drunken recklessness, that the devil put out the eyes of one of them, so that he was blind the rest of his days.

[82] In his fascinating essay on the ‘Folk-Lore of France,’ in the ‘Folk-Lore Record’ for 1878 (published by the Folk-Lore Society) Mr. A. Lang says: ‘So widespread is this superstition, that a friend of mine declares he has met with it among the savages of New Caledonia, and has known a native who actually died, as he himself said he would, after meeting one of the fairy women of the wild wood.’

[84]‘The Life and Death of Mr. Vavasor Powell,’ p. 8. (A curious seventeenth century book, no two existing copies of which appear to be

alike. I here cite from that in the library of the Marquis of Bute, than which a more perfect copy is rarely met with.)

VI.

The mode of summoning and of exorcising familiar spirits—in other words, of laying and raising the devil—varies little the world over. Even in China, the magic circle is entered and incantations are muttered when the fiend is summoned; and for the exorcism of devils there are laws like our own—though since modern Christianity has been introduced in China the most popular exorcist is the Christian missionary. In Wales, the popular belief is compounded of about equal parts of foul magic and fair Biblical text; magic chiefly for summoning, the Book for exorcising.

John Jenkin, a schoolmaster in Pembrokeshire, was a conjuror of renown in that part of Wales. One of his scholars who had a curiosity to see the devil made bold to ask the master to assist him to that entertainment. ‘May see him,’ said the master, ‘if thou hast the courage for it. Still,’ he added, ‘I do not choose to call him till I have employment for him.’ So the boy waited; and not long after a man came to the master saying he had lost some money, and wished to be told who had stolen it. ‘Now,’ the master said to the scholar, ‘I have some business for him.’ At night they went into the wood together and drew a circle, which they entered, and the schoolmaster called one of the spirits of evil by its name. Presently they saw a light in the sky, which shot like lightning down to the circle, and turned round about it. The conjuror asked it who had stolen the man's money; the spirit did not know, and it disappeared. Then the schoolmaster called another evil spirit by its name; and presently they saw the resemblance of a bull flying through the air towards them, so swiftly and fiercely as if it would go through them; and it also turned about the circle. But the conjuror asked it in vain who had the stolen money. ‘I must call still another,’ said he. The schoolboy was now almost dead with fear, and the conjuror considerately waited till he was somewhat revived before calling the third spirit. But when he did call, there came out of the wood a spirit dressed in white, and went about the circle. ‘Ah,’ said the schoolmaster, ‘we shall now hear something from this.’ And sure enough ‘this’ told the conjuror (in a language the boy could not understand) where the money was, and all about it. Then it vanished in red fire; and that boy

‘has never been well since, the effect of the great fright still cleaving to him.’

Not far from Glanbran, in Carmarthenshire, lived a tailor, who added to his trade as a breeches-mender the loftier, if wickeder, employments of a worker in magic. A certain Mr. Gwynne, living at Glanbran, took it upon himself to ridicule this terrible tailor, for the tailor was a little man, and Mr. Gwynne was a burly six-footer, who feared nobody. ‘Thou have the courage to look upon the devil!’ sneered Gwynne; ‘canst thou show him to me?’ ‘That I can,’ said the tailor, his eyes flashing angrily; ‘but you are not able to look at him.’ ‘What!’ roared Gwynne, ‘thou able to look at him, and not I?’ ‘Very well,’ quoth the tailor; ‘if you are able to look at him I will show him to you.’ It was in the day time, but the tailor went immediately into a little grove of wood in a field hard by, and made a circle in the usual manner. In a short time he returned to fetch the incredulous Mr. Gwynne, saying, ‘Come with me and you shall see him.’ The two then crossed the field until they came to the stile by the wood, when suddenly the tailor cried, ‘Look yonder! there it is!’ And looking, Mr. Gwynne saw, in the circle the tailor had drawn, ‘one of the fallen angels, now become a devil.’ It was so horrible a sight that the terrified Mr. Gwynne was never after able to describe it; but from that time forth he had a proper respect for the tailor.

CHAPTER VI.

The Evil Spirit in his customary Form—The stupid Medieval Devil in Wales—Sion Cent—The Devil outwitted—Pacts with the Fiend and their Avoidance—Sion Dafydd's Foul Pipe—The Devil's Bridge and its Legends—Similar Legends in other Lands—The Devil's Pulpit near Tintern—Angelic Spirits—Welsh Superstitions as to pronouncing the Name of the Evil Spirit—The Bardic Tradition of the Creation—The Struggle between Light and Darkness and its Symbolization.

I.

The devil has often appeared in Wales in his customary form, or with his distinctive marks covered up by such clothing as mortals wear. There was even a tailor in Cardiganshire who had the honour of making a suit of clothes for his sulphuric majesty. The medieval view of this malignant spirit—which makes the devil out as dull and stupid as he is mendacious and spiteful—still lingers in some parts. Those formal pacts with the devil, the first traces of which are found in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, have been made in great numbers in Wales; and tales in which the devil is outwitted by a mortal are still preserved with much distinctness in various localities. That the myth of Polyphemus reappears in all accounts of this sort, is pretty well agreed among students of folk-lore. Hercules and Cacus, Polyphemus and Odysseus, Peredur and the one-eyed monster of the Mabinogion, Gambrinus and der Teufel, Jack the Giant-Killer, Norse Jötuns and Arabian genii tricked and bottled; all these are deemed outgrowths of the same primeval idea, to wit, the victory of the sun-god over the night-fiend; and the story of Sion Cent's compact with the diawl is doubtless from the same root. Certain it is that were not the devil at times gullible, he never would have been so useful as a familiar spirit, never could have been made so completely a slave to his mortal masters. The Pope (Benedict IX.) who had seven evil spirits in a sugar-bottle, merely subdivided the arch-fiend in the same way the genii of the old tales are subdivided—now existing as a dense and visible form, again expanding to

blot out the sky, and again entering the narrow compass of a bottle or a nut-shell; co-existing in a million places at the same instant, yet having a single individuality.

II.

Tradition relates that Sion Cent was a famous necromancer in Monmouthshire, who outwitted the devil, not once but many times. He lives in popular legend simply as a worker in magic, but in reality he was a worthy minister, the Rev. John Kent, who flourished from 1420 to 1470, and wrote several theological works in Latin. In his native Welsh he confined himself to poetry, and Sion Cent was his Cymric pseudonym. Like many learned men in those days, he was accredited with magical powers by the ignorant peasantry, and of his transactions with the devil many stories were then invented which still survive. One relates that he once served as a farmer's boy, and was set to keep the crows from the corn, but preferring to go to Grosmont fair, he confined the crows in an old roofless barn by a magic spell till the next day, when he returned. His compact with the devil enabled him to build the bridge over the Monnow, near Grosmont, which still bears his name. The compact gave the devil the man's soul, as all such compacts do—the stipulation being that if his body were buried either in or out of the church, his soul should be forfeit to the diawl. But the shrewd Welshman gave orders that he should be buried exactly under the chancel wall, so that he should lie neither in the church nor out of it; and the devil was made a fool of by this device. A precisely similar tradition exists concerning an old gentleman in Carmarthenshire.

III.

A popular legend giving the origin of the jack-o'-lantern in Wales deals with the idea of a stupid devil: A long time ago there lived on the hills of Arfon an old man of the name of Sion Dafydd, who used to converse much with one of the children of the bottomless pit. One morning Sion was on his way to Llanfair-Fechan, carrying a flail on his shoulder, for he had corn there, when whom should he meet but his old friend from the pit, with a bag on his back, and in it two little devils like himself. After conversing for some time they began to quarrel, and presently were in the midst of a terrible fight. Sion fell to basting the devils with his flail, until

the bag containing the two little ones went all to pieces, and the two tumbling out, fled for their lives to Rhiwgyfylchi, which village is considered to this day a very wicked place from this fact. Sion then went his way rejoicing, and did not for a long time encounter his adversary. Eventually, however, they met, and this time Sion had his gun on his shoulder. ‘What's that long thing you're carrying?’ inquired the devil. ‘That's my pipe,’ said Sion. Then the devil asked, ‘Shall I have a whiff out of it?’ ‘You shall,’ was Sion's reply, and he placed the mouth of his gun in the devil's throat and drew the trigger. Well; that was the loudest report from a gun that was ever heard on this earth. ‘Ach!—tw!—tw!’ exclaimed the smoker, ‘your pipe is very foul,’ and he disappeared in a flame. After a lapse of time, Sion met him again in the guise of a gentleman, but the Welshman knew it was the tempter. This time he made a bargain for which he was ever afterwards sorry, i.e., he sold himself to the devil for a sum down, but with the understanding that whenever he could cling to something the devil should not then control him. One day when Sion was busily gardening, the evil one snatched him away into the air without warning, and Sion was about giving up all hopes of again returning to earth, when he thought to himself, ‘I'll ask the devil one last favour.’ The stupid devil listened. ‘All I want is an apple,’ said Sion, ‘to moisten my lips a bit down below; let me go to the top of my apple-tree, and I'll pick one.’ ‘Is that all?’ quoth the diawl, and consented. Of course Sion laid hold of the apple-tree, and hung on. The devil had to leave him there. But the old reprobate was too wicked for heaven, and the devil having failed to take him to the other place, he was turned into a fairy, and is now the jack-o'-lantern.

IV.

Best known among the natural objects in various parts of Wales which are connected with the devil in popular lore, is the Devil's Bridge, in Cardiganshire. Associated with this bridge are several legends, which derive their greatest interest from their intrinsic evidences of an antiquity in common with the same legends in other lands. The guide-books of the region, like guide-books everywhere, in their effort to avoid being led into unwarranted statement, usually indulge in playfully sarcastic references to these ancient tales. They are much older, however, than the bridge itself

can possibly be. The devil's activity in bridge-building is a myth more ancient than the medieval devil of our acquaintance. The building story of the Devil's Bridge in Cardiganshire runs briefly thus: An old woman who had lost her cow spied it on the other side of the ravine, and was in great trouble about it, not knowing how to get over where the animal was. The devil, taking advantage of her distress, offered to throw a bridge over the ravine, so that she might cross and get her cow; but he stipulated that the first living creature to cross the bridge should be his. The old woman agreed; the bridge was built; and the devil waited to see her cross. She drew a crust of bread from her pocket, threw it over, and her little black dog flew after it. ‘The dog's yours, sir,’ said the dame; and Satan was discomfited. In the story told of the old bridge over the Main at Frankfort, a bridge-contractor and his troubles are substituted for the old woman and her cow; instead of a black dog a live rooster appears, driven in front of him by the contractor. The Welsh Satan seems to have received his discomfiture good-naturedly enough; in the German tale he tears the fowl to pieces in his rage. In Switzerland, every reader knows the story told of the devil's bridge in the St. Gothard pass. A new bridge has taken the place, for public use, of the old bridge on the road to Andermatt, and to the dangers of the crumbling masonry are added superstitious terrors concerning the devil's power to catch any one crossing after dark. The old Welsh bridge has been in like manner superseded by a modern structure; but I think no superstition like the last noted is found at Hafod.

V.

The English have a saying that the devil lives in the middle of Wales. There is in every part of Wales that I have seen a custom of whitening the doorsteps with chalk, and it is said to have originated in the belief that his Satanic majesty could not enter a door thus protected. The devil of slovenliness certainly would find difficulty in entering a Welsh cottage if the tidiness of its doorstep is borne out in the interior. But out-of-doors everywhere there are signs of the devil's active habits. His flowers grow on the river-banks; his toes are imprinted on the rocks. Near Tintern Abbey there is a jutting crag overhung by gloomy branches of the yew, called the Devil's Pulpit. His eminence used in other and wickeder days to preach atrocious morals, or immorals, to the white-robed Cistercian monks of the

abbey, from this rocky pulpit. One day the devil grew bold, and taking his tail under his arm in an easy and *dégagée* manner, hobnobbed familiarly with the monks, and finally proposed, just for a lark, that he should preach them a nice red-hot sermon from the rood-loft of the abbey. To this the monks agreed, and the devil came to church in high glee. But fancy his profane perturbation (I had nearly written holy horror) when the treacherous Cistercians proceeded to shower him with holy water. The devil clapped his tail between his legs and scampered off howling, and never stopped till he got to Llandogo, where he leaped across the river into England, leaving the prints of his talons on a stone.

VI.

Where accounts of the devil's appearance are so numerous, it is perhaps somewhat surprising so little is heard of apparitions of angels. There are reasons for this, however, which might be enlarged upon. Tradition says that ‘in former times’ there were frequent visits of angels to Wales; and their rare appearance in our days is ascribed to the completion of revelation. One or two modern instances of angelic visitation are given by the Prophet Jones. There was David Thomas, who lived at a place called the Pantau, between the towns of Carmarthen and Laugharne; he was ‘a gifted brother, who sometimes preached,’ in the dissenting way. One night, when he was at prayer alone in a room which stood apart from his house, there was suddenly a great light present, which made the light of the candle no longer visible. And in that light appeared a band of angels, like children, very beautiful in bright clothing, singing in Welsh these words:

Pa hyd? Pa hyd? Dychwelwch feibion Adda! Pa hyd? Pa hyd yr erlidiwch y Cristnogion duwiol?

How long? How long? Return ye sons of Adam! How long? How long will ye persecute the godly Christians?

After a time they departed; reappeared; departed again; the great light faded; and the light of Mr. Thomas's candle was once more visible on his table. There was also Rees David, a man of more than common piety, who lived in Carmarthenshire, near Whitlands. At the time of his death, it was testified by ‘several religious persons who were in the room,’ that there was heard, by them and by the dying man, the singing of angels. It drew

nearer and nearer as his death-struggle grew imminent, and after his death they ‘heard the pleasant incomparable singing gradually depart, until it was out of hearing.’

That the dying do see something more, in the last moment of expiring nature, than it is given to living eyes to see, is a cherished belief by numberless Christian men and women, whom to suspect of superstitious credulity were to grossly offend. This belief is based on exclamations uttered by the dying, while with fixed and staring eyes they appeared to gaze intently at some object not visible to the bystanders. But that the bystanders also saw, or heard, voice or vision from the Unknown, is not often pretended.

VII.

Reference has been made to the euphemisms in use among all peoples to avoid pronouncing the name of the devil. That many good folk still consider the word devil, lightly spoken, a profane utterance only second to a similar utterance of God's name, is a curious survival of old superstitions. No prohibition of this sort attaches to the words demon, fiend, etc., nor to such euphemisms, common in both Welsh and English, as the adversary, the evil one, etc. It is an old custom in North Wales to spit at the name of the devil, even when so innocently used as in pronouncing the name of the Devil's Bridge. The peasantry prefer to call the bridge ‘Pont y Gwr Drwg,’ the Bridge of the Wicked One; and spitting and wiping off the tongue are deemed a necessary precaution after saying devil, diafol, or diawl. The phrase ‘I hope to goodness,’ so common in Wales and elsewhere, is clearly but another euphemism for God; the goodness meant is the Divine beneficence. ‘Goodness' sake’ is but a contraction of ‘For God's sake!’ The Hebrew tetragrammaton which was invested with such terror, as representing the great ‘I am,’ finds an explanation, according to the ideas of Welsh scholars, in the Bardic traditions. These relate that, by the utterance of His Name, God created this world; the Name being represented by the symbol /|\, three lines which typify the focusing of the rising sun's rays at the equinoxes and solstices. The first ray is the Creator, the second the Preserver, and the third the Destroyer; the whole are God's Name. This name cannot be uttered by a mortal; he has not the power; therefore it remains for ever unuttered on

earth. At the creation the universe uttered it in joy at the new-born world; ‘the morning stars sang together.’ At the last day it will be uttered again. Till then it is kept a secret, lest it be degraded, as it has been by the Hindus, who, from the three rays created their three false gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Tradition relates that Einigan Gawr saw the Divine Name appear, and inscribed it on three rods of mountain ash. The people mistook the three rods thus inscribed for God himself, and Einigan died from grief at their error.

VIII.

The devil with which we are acquainted is a character unknown to Greek or Roman mythology; this devil was a later invention; but his identity with the genii, or jinns of the ‘Arabian Nights,’ the Dïvs of Persian history, is clear enough. Ahriman, the evil spirit, king of the realms of darkness and of fire, was apparently the progenitor of Satan, as Vritra was of Ahriman. Both these ancient arch-fiends appeared as serpents in form, and were myths representing the darkness, slain by the light, or the sun-god, in the one case called Indra, in the other Ormuzd. The medieval devil with horns and hoofs does not appear in the records of Judaism. He is an outgrowth of the moral principle of the Christian era; and traced to his origins he is simply a personification of the adversary in the never-ending struggle on earth between light and darkness. That struggle is not, in nature, a moral one; but it remains to-day, as it was in the beginning, the best type we have of the battle between right and wrong, and between truth and error. When God said, ‘Let there be light,’ the utterance became the symbol and guide of virtue, of brave endeavour, and of scientific research, until the end.

CHAPTER VII.

Cambrian Death-Portents—The Corpse-Bird—The Tan-Wedd—Listening at the Church-Door—The Lledrith—The Gwrach y Rhibyn—The Llandaff Gwrach—Ugliness of this Female Apparition—The Black Maiden—The Cyhyraeth, or Crying Spirit—Its Moans on Land and Sea—The St. Mellons Cyhyraeth—The Groaning Spirit of Bedwellty.

I.

There are death portents in every country, and in endless variety; in Wales these portents assume distinct and striking individualities, in great number and with clearly defined attributes. The banshee, according to Mr. Baring-Gould, has no corresponding feature in Scandinavian, Teutonic, or classic mythology, and belongs entirely to the Celts. The Welsh have the banshee in its most blood-curdling form under the name of the Gwrach y Rhibyn; they have also the Cyhyraeth, which is never seen, but is heard, moaning dolefully and dreadfully in the night; the Tolaeth, also only heard, not groaning but imitating some earthly sound, such as sawing, singing, or the tramping of feet; the Cwn Annwn and Cwn y Wybr, Dogs of Hell and Dogs of the Sky; the Canwyll Corph, or Corpse Candle; the Teulu, or Goblin Funeral, and many others—all of them death-portents. These, as the more important and striking, I will describe further; but there are several others which must first be mentioned.

The Aderyn y Corph is a bird which chirps at the door of the person who is about to die, and makes a noise that sounds like the Welsh word for ‘Come! come!’ the summons to death.[88] In ancient tradition, it had no feathers nor wings, soaring without support high in the heavens, and, when not engaged upon some earthly message, dwelling in the land of illusion and phantasy. This corpse-bird may properly be associated with the superstition regarding the screech-owl, whose cry near a sick-bed inevitably portends death. The untimely crowing of a cock also foretells the sudden demise of some member of the family. In North Wales the cry of the golden plover is a death-omen; these birds are called, in this

connection, the whistlers. The same superstition prevails in Warwickshire, and the sound is called the seven whistlers.

Thunder and lightning in mid-winter announce the death of the great man of the parish. This superstition is thought to be peculiar to Wales, or to the wilder and more secluded parts of North Wales. Also deemed peculiar to Wales is the Tan-wedd, a fiery apparition which falls on the lands of a freeholder who is about to die. It is described as appearing somewhat similar to falling stars, but slower of motion. ‘It lighteneth all the air and ground where it passeth,’ says ‘the honest Welshman, Mr. Davis, in a letter to Mr. Baxter,’ adding, ‘lasteth three or four miles or more, for aught is known, because no man seeth the rising or beginning of it; and when it falls to the ground it sparkleth and lighteth all about.’ It also comes as a duty-performing goblin, after a death, haunting the graveyard, and calling attention to some special grave by its conduct, as in the following account: Walter Watkins, of the Neuadd, in a parish of Brecknockshire, was going one dark night towards Taf Fechan Chapel, not far from his house, when he saw a light near the chapel. It increased till it was as big as a church tower, and decreased again till it was as small as a star; then enlarged again and decreased as before; and this it did several times. He went to his house and fetched his father and mother to see it, and they all saw it plainly, much to their astonishment and wonder. Some time after, as a neighbour was ploughing in a field near the chapel, about where the mysterious light had been seen, the plough struck against a large flat stone. This the ploughman raised up, after a deal of difficulty, and under it he found a stone chest, in which was the jawbone of a man, and nought else except an earthen jug. The bone was supposed to be the remains of a man who had disappeared long before, and whose wife had since married; and on her being told of it, she fell ill and died. The light, which had often been seen before by various persons, was after this seen no more. It was believed to be the spirit of the murdered man, appearing as a light.

Listening at the church-door in the dark, to hear shouted by a ghostly voice in the deserted edifice the names of those who are shortly to be buried in the adjoining churchyard, is a Hallow E'en custom in some parts of Wales. In other parts, the window serves the same purpose. There are said to be still extant, outside some village churches, steps which were constructed in order to enable the superstitious peasantry to climb to the

window to listen. The principle of ‘expectant attention,’ so well known to physiological science, would be likely in this case to act with special force as a ghost-raiser. In an ancient MS. by Llywelyn Sion, of Llangewydd, there is mention of a frightful monster called the Fad Felen, which was seen through the key-hole of Rhos church by Maelgwn Gwynedd, who ‘died in consequence.’ This monster was predicted in a poem by Taliesin, as a ‘strange creature’ which should come from the sea marsh, with hair and teeth and eyes like gold. The yellow fever plague, which raged in Wales during some five years in the sixth century, is the monster referred to in this legend.

The Scotch wraith and Irish fetch have their parallel in Wales in the Lledrith, or spectre of a person seen before his death; it never speaks, and vanishes if spoken to. It has been seen by miners previous to a fatal accident in the mine. The story is told of a miner who saw himself lying dead and horribly maimed in a phantom tram-car, led by a phantom horse, and surrounded by phantom miners. As he watched this dreadful group of spectres they passed on, looking neither to the right nor the left, and faded away. The miner's dog was as frightened as its master at the sight, and ran howling into the darkness. Though deeming himself doomed, the miner continued to work in the pit; and as the days passed on, and no harm came to him, he grew more cheerful, and was so bold as to laugh at the superstition. The day he did this, a stone fell from the roof and broke his arm. As soon as he recovered he resumed work in the pit; his death followed instantly. A stone crushed him, and he was borne maimed and dead in the tram along the road where his lledrith had appeared, ‘a mile below the play of sunshine and wave of trees.’

The Mallt y Nos, or night-fiend, is a death-omen mentioned by Rev. D. R. Thomas in the ‘Archæologia Cambrensis’; and Croker gives as the Welsh parallel of the Irish death-coach a spectre called ceffyl heb un pen, or the headless horse. The marw coel, or ‘yellow spot before death,’ is another death-omen which I have been able to trace no further than the pages where I find it.

[88] ‘Dewch! dewch!’

II.

A frightful figure among Welsh apparitions is the Gwrach y Rhibyn, whose crowning distinction is its prodigious ugliness. The feminine pronoun is generally used in speaking of this goblin, which unlike the majority of its kind, is supposed to be a female. A Welsh saying, regarding one of her sex who is the reverse of lovely, is, ‘Y mae mor salw a Gwrach y Rhibyn,’ (She is as ugly as the Gwrach y Rhibyn.) The spectre is a hideous being with dishevelled hair, long black teeth, long, lank, withered arms, leathern wings, and a cadaverous appearance. In the stillness of night it comes and flaps its wings against the window, uttering at the same time a blood-curdling howl, and calling by name on the person who is to die, in a lengthened dying tone, as thus: ‘Da-a-a-vy!’ ‘De-i-i-o-o-o ba-a-a-ch!’ The effect of its shriek or howl is indescribably terrific, and its sight blasting to the eyes of the beholder. It is always an omen of death, though its warning cry is heard under varying circumstances; sometimes it appears in the mist on the mountain side, or at cross-roads, or by a piece of water which it splashes with its hands. The gender of apparitions is no doubt as a rule the neuter, but the Gwrach y Rhibyn defies all rules by being a female which at times sees fit to be a male. In its female character it has a trick of crying at intervals, in a most doleful tone, ‘Oh! oh! fy ngwr, fy ngwr!’ (my husband! my husband!) But when it chooses to be a male, this cry is changed to ‘Fy ngwraig! fy ngwraig!’ (my wife! my wife!) or ‘Fy mlentyn, fy mlentyn bach!’ (my child, my little child!) There is a frightful story of a dissipated peasant who met this goblin on the road one night, and thought it was a living woman; he therefore made wicked and improper overtures to it, with the result of having his soul nearly frightened out of his body in the horror of discovering his mistake. As he emphatically exclaimed, ‘Och, Dduw! it was the Gwrach y Rhibyn, and not a woman at all.’

III.

The Gwrach y Rhibyn recently appeared, according to an account given me by a person who claimed to have seen it, at Llandaff. Surely, no more probable site for the appearance of a spectre so ancient of lineage could be found, than that ancient cathedral city where some say was the earliest Christian fane in Great Britain, and which was certainly the seat of the earliest Christian bishopric. My narrator was a respectable-looking man of

the peasant-farmer class, whom I met in one of my walks near Cardiff, in the summer of 1878. ‘It was at Llandaff,’ he said to me, 'on the fourteenth of last November, when I was on a visit to an old friend, that I saw and heard the Gwrach y Rhibyn. I was sleeping in my bed, and was woke at midnight by a frightful screeching and a shaking of my window. It was a loud and clear screech, and the shaking of the window was very plain, but it seemed to go by like the wind. I was not so much frightened, sir, as you may think; excited I was—that's the word—excited; and I jumped out of bed and rushed to the window and flung it open. Then I saw the Gwrach y Rhibyn, saw her plainly, sir, a horrible old woman with long red hair and a face like chalk, and great teeth like tusks, looking back over her shoulder at me as she went through the air with a long black gown trailing along the ground below her arms, for body I could make out none. She gave another unearthly screech while I looked at her; then I heard her flapping her wings against the window of a house just below the one I was in, and she vanished from my sight. But I kept on staring into the darkness, and as I am a living man, sir, I saw her go in at the door of the Cow and Snuffers Inn, and return no more. I watched the door of the inn a long time, but she did not come out. The next day, it's the honest truth I'm telling you, they told me the man who kept the Cow and Snuffers Inn was dead—had died in the night. His name was Llewellyn, sir—you can ask any one about him, at Llandaff—he had kept the inn there for seventy years, and his family before him for three hundred years, just at that very spot. It's not these new families that the Gwrach y Rhibyn ever troubles, sir, it's the old stock.'

IV.

The close resemblance of this goblin to the Irish banshee (or benshi) will be at once perceived. The same superstition is found among other peoples of Celtic origin. Sir Walter Scott mentions it among the highlands of Scotland. It is not traced among other than Celtic peoples distinctly, but its association with the primeval mythology is doubtless to be found in the same direction with many other death-omens, to wit, the path of the wind-god Hermes.

The frightful ugliness of the Gwrach y Rhibyn is a consistent feature of the superstition, in both its forms; it recalls the Black Maiden who came to

Caerleon and liberated Peredur: ‘Blacker were her face and her two hands than the blackest iron covered with pitch; and her hue was not more frightful than her form. High cheeks had she, and a face lengthened downwards, and a short nose with distended nostrils. And one eye was of a piercing mottled gray, and the other was as black as jet, deep-sunk in her head. And her teeth were long and yellow, more yellow were they than the flower of the broom. And her stomach rose from the breast-bone, higher than her chin. And her back was in the shape of a crook, and her legs were large and bony. And her figure was very thin and spare, except her feet and legs, which were of huge size.’ The Welsh word ‘gwrach’ means a hag or witch, and it has been fancied that there is a connection between this word and the mythical Avagddu,[98] whose wife the gwrach was.

The Gwrach y Rhibyn appears also as a river-spectre, in Glamorganshire.

[98] Avagddu means both hell and the devil, as our word Heaven means both the Deity and his abode.

V.

A death-portent which is often confused with the Gwrach y Rhibyn, yet which is rendered quite distinct by its special attributes, is the Cyhyraeth. This is a groaning spirit. It is never seen, but the noise it makes is no less terrible to the ear than the appearance of its visible sister is to the eye. Among groaning spirits it is considered to be the chief. The Prophet Jones succinctly characterises it as ‘a doleful, dreadful noise in the night, before a burying.’ David Prosser, of Llanybyther parish, ‘a sober, sensible man and careful to tell the truth,’ once heard the Cyhyraeth in the early part of the night, his wife and maid-servant being together in the house, and also hearing it; and when it came opposite the window, it ‘pronounced these strange words, of no signification that we know of,’ viz. ‘*Woolach! Woolach!*’ Some time afterward a funeral passed that way. The judicious Joshua Coslet, who lived by the river Towy in Carmarthenshire, testified that the Cyhyraeth is often heard there, and that it is ‘a doleful, disagreeable sound heard before the deaths of many, and most apt to be heard before foul weather. The voice resembles the groaning of sick persons who are to die; heard at first at a distance, then comes nearer, and the last near at hand; so that it is a threefold warning of death. It begins

strong, and louder than a sick man can make; the second cry is lower, but not less doleful, but rather more so; the third yet lower, and soft, like the groaning of a sick man almost spent and dying.' A person 'well remembering the voice' and coming to the sick man's bed, 'shall hear his groans exactly like' those which he had before heard from the Cyhyraeth. This crying spirit especially affected the twelve parishes in the hundred of Inis Cenin, which lie on the south-east side of the river Towy, 'where some time past it groaned before the death of every person who lived that side of the country.' It also sounded before the death of persons 'who were born in these parishes, but died elsewhere.' Sometimes the voice is heard long before death, but not longer than three quarters of a year. So common was it in the district named, that among the people there a familiar form of reproach to any one making a disagreeable noise, or 'children crying or groaning unreasonable,' was to ejaculate, 'Oh 'r Cyhyraeth!' A reason why the Cyhyraeth was more often heard in the hundred of Inis Cenin was thought to be that Non, the mother of St. David, lived in those parts, where a village is called after her name, Llan-non, the church of Non.

On the southern sea-coast, in Glamorganshire, the Cyhyraeth is sometimes heard by the people in the villages on shore passing down the channel with loud moans, while those dismal lights which forebode a wreck are seen playing along the waves. Watchers by the sea-shore have also heard its moan far out on the ocean, gradually drawing nearer and nearer, and then dying away; and when they thought it gone it has suddenly shrieked close to their startled ears, chilling their very marrows. Then, long after, they would hear it, now faint, now loud, going along the sands into the distant darkness. One or more corpses were usually washed ashore soon after. In the villages the Cyhyraeth is heard passing through the empty streets and lanes by night, groaning dismally, sometimes rattling the window-shutters, or flinging open the door as it flits by. When going along the country lanes it will thus horrify the inmates of every house it passes. Some old people say it is only heard before the death of such as are of strayed mind, or who have long been ill; but it always comes when an epidemic is about to visit the neighbourhood.

A tradition of the Cyhyraeth is connected with the parish churchyard at St. Mellons, a quaint old-fashioned village within easy tramping distance of Cardiff, but in Monmouthshire. It is of a boy who was sent on an

errand, and who heard the Cyhyraeth crying in the churchyard, first in one place, then in another, and finally in a third place, where it rested. Some time after, a corpse was brought to that churchyard to be buried, but some person came and claimed the grave. They went to another place, but that also was claimed. Then they went to a third place, and there they were allowed to bury their dead in peace. And this going about with the corpse was ‘just the same as the boy declared it.’ Of course the boy could not know what was to come to pass, ‘but this crying spirit knew exactly what would come to pass.’ I was also told by a person at St. Mellons that a ghost had been seen sitting upon the old stone cross which stands on the hillside near the church.

VI.

Other groaning spirits are sometimes heard. A girl named Mary Morgan, living near Crumlyn Bridge, while standing on the bridge one evening was seized with mortal terror on hearing a groaning voice going up the river, uttering the words, ‘O Dduw, beth a wnaf fi?’ (O God, what shall I do?) many times repeated, amid direful groans. The conclusion of this narration is a hopeless mystery, as Mary fainted away with her fright.

Much more satisfactory, as a ghost-story with a moral, is the tale of the groaning spirit of Bedwellty. There was one night a wake at the house of Meredith Thomas, over the body of his four-year-old child, at which two profane men (named Thomas Edward Morgan and Anthony Aaron) began playing at cards, and swearing most horribly. In the parish of Bedwellty, the wakes—or watch-nights, as they are more commonly called in Wales—were at that time very profanely kept. ‘Few besides the dissenters,’ says Jones (who was himself a dissenter, it must be remembered), ‘had the sense and courage to forbid’ this wickedness, but ‘suffered it as a custom, because the pretence was to divert the relations of the dead, and lessen their sorrows.’ While the aforementioned profane men were playing cards and swearing, suddenly a dismal groaning noise was heard at the window. At this the company was much frightened, excepting the card-players, who said ‘Pw!’ and went on playing. But to pacify the rest of the company they finally desisted, and at once the groaning ceased. Soon after they began playing again, when at once the groaning set up in most lamentable tones, so that people shuddered; but the profane men again said, ‘Pw! it is some

fellow playing tricks to frighten us.' 'No,' said William Harry Rees, a good man of the Baptist persuasion, 'it is no human being there groaning, but a spirit,' and again he desired them to give over. But though they were so bold with their card-playing, these wicked men had not the hardihood to venture out and see who it was 'playing tricks,' as they called it. However, one of the company said, 'I will go, and take the dogs with me, and see if there be any human being there.' The groaning still continued. This bold person then 'took the prime staff, and began to call the dogs to go with him;' but the dogs could not be induced to go out, being in great terror at the groaning noise, and sought to hide themselves under the stools, and about the people's feet. In vain they beat the dogs, and kicked and scolded them, out-door they would not go. This at last convinced the profane men, and they left off playing, for fear the devil should come among them. For it was told in other places that people had played cards till his sulphurous majesty appeared in person.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Tolaeth Death Portent—Its various Forms—The Tolaeth before Death—Ewythr Jenkin's Tolaeth—A modern Instance—The Railway Victim's Warning—The Goblin Voice—The Voice from the Cloud—Legend of the Lord and the Beggar—The Goblin Funeral—The Horse's Skull—The Goblin Veil—The Wraith of Llanllwch—Dogs of Hell—The Tale of Pwyll—Spiritual Hunting Dogs—Origin of the Cwn Annwn.

I.

The Tolaeth is an ominous sound, imitating some earthly sound of one sort or another, and always heard before either a funeral or some dreadful catastrophe. Carpenters of a superstitious turn of mind will tell you that they invariably hear the Tolaeth when they are going to receive an order to make a coffin; in this case the sound is that of the sawing of wood, the hammering of nails, and the turning of screws, such as are heard in the usual process of making a coffin. This is called the ‘Tolaeth before the Coffin.’ The ‘Tolaeth before Death’ is a supernatural noise heard about the house, such as a knocking, or the sound of footsteps in the dead of night. Sometimes it is the sound of a tolling bell, where no bell is; and the direction in which the ear is held at the time points out the place of the coming death. Formerly the veritable church-bell in its steeple would foretell death, by tolling thrice at the hour of midnight, unrung by human hands. The bell of Blaenporth, Cardiganshire, was noted for thus warning the neighbours. The ‘Tolaeth before the Burying’ is the sound of the funeral procession passing by, unseen, but heard. The voices are heard singing the ‘Old Hundredth,’ which is the psalm tune usually sung by funeral bands; the slow regular tramp of the feet is heard, and the sobbing and groaning of the mourners. The Tolaeth touches but one sense at a time. When this funeral procession is heard it cannot be seen. But it is a peculiarity of the Tolaeth that after it has been heard by the ear, it sometimes makes itself known to the eye also—but in silence. The funeral procession will at first be heard, and then if the hearer stoop forward and

look along the ground, it may perhaps be seen; the psalm-singers, two abreast, with their hats off and their mouths open, as in the act of singing; the coffin, borne on the shoulders of four men who hold their hats by the side of their heads; the mourners, the men with long black hatbands streaming behind, the women pale and sorrowful, with upheld handkerchiefs; and the rest of the procession stretching away dimly into shadow. Not a sound is heard, either of foot or voice, although the singers' mouths are open. After the procession has passed, and the observer has risen from his stooping posture, the Tolaeth again breaks on the ear, the music, the tread of feet, and the sobbing, as before. A real funeral is sure to pass that way not long afterwards.

This form of the Tolaeth should not be confused with the Teulu, or Goblin Funeral proper, which is a death-warning occupying its own place.

II.

John Clode, an honest labouring man living on the coast of Glamorganshire, near the Sker Rocks, had just gone to bed one night, when he and his wife heard the door open, the tread of shuffling feet, the moving about of chairs, and the grunting of men as if setting down a load. This was all in the room where they lay, it being the only room their cottage afforded, except the one upstairs. ‘John, John!’ cried his wife in alarm, ‘what is this?’ In vain John rubbed his eyes and stared into the darkness. Nothing could he see. Two days afterward their only son was brought home drowned; and his corpse being borne into the house upon a ladder, there were the same noises of opening the door, the shuffling of feet, the moving of chairs, the setting down of the burden, that the Tolaeth had touched their ears with. ‘John, John!’ murmured poor Mrs. Clode; ‘this is exactly what I heard in the night.’ ‘Yes, wife,’ quoth John, ‘it was the Tolaeth before Death.’

Before Ewythr Jenkin of Nash died, his daughter Gwenllian heard the Tolaeth. She had taken her old father's breeches from under his pillow to mend them (for he was very careful always to fold and put his breeches under his pillow, especially if there was a sixpence in the pocket), and just as she was about sitting down at the table on which she had thrown them, there came a loud rap on the table, which startled her very much. ‘Oh, Jenny, what was that?’ she asked of the servant girl; but Jenny could only

stare at her mistress, more frightened than herself. Again did Gwenllian essay to sit and take the breeches in hand, when there came upon the table a double rap, much louder than the first, a rap, in fact, that made all the chairs and kettles ring. So then Gwenllian fainted away.

At a place called by its owner Llynwent, in Radnorshire, at a certain time the man of the house and his wife were gone from home. The rest of the family were sitting at supper, when three of the servants heard the sound of horses coming toward the house, and cried out, ‘There, they are coming!’ thinking it was their master and mistress returning home. But on going out to meet them, there was nobody near. They re-entered the house, somewhat uneasy in their minds at this strange thing, and clustered about the fire, with many expressions of wonderment. While they were so seated, ‘Hark!’ said one, and all listening intently, heard footsteps passing by them and going up stairs, and voices of people talking among themselves. Not long afterward three of the family fell sick and died.

III.

An instance of recent occurrence is given by a local newspaper correspondent writing from the scene of a Welsh railway accident in October, 1878. It was at Pontypridd, famous the world over for its graceful bridge, (now old and superannuated,) and renowned in Druidic story as a seat of learning. A victim of the railway accident was, a few days before the collision, 'sitting with his wife at the fireside, when he had an omen. The house was still, and they were alone, only a little servant girl being with them. Then, while so sitting and talking, they both heard a heavy footstep ascending the stairs, step by step, step by step, as that of one carrying a burden. They looked at one another, and the husband called, “Run, Mary, upstairs; some one has gone up.” Mary did run, but there was no one. She was told to look in every room, and she did so, and it was put down as fancy. When the news was borne to the poor wife on Saturday night, she started up and said, “There now, that was the omen!”' That his readers may not by any perversity fail to understand him as alluding to the Tolaeth before Death, our newspaper correspondent states his creed: 'I believe in omens. I knew a lady who heard distinctly three raps at her door. Another lady was sitting with her near it too. The door was an inner door. No servant was in the house. The two ladies heard it, and yet no

human hand touched that door, and at the time when the knock was heard a dear brother was dying. I know of strange things of this sort. Of voices crying the names of half-sleeping relatives when the waves were washing some one dear away to the mighty deep; but then the world laughs at all this and the world goes on.' The correspondent is severe; there is nothing here to laugh at.

IV.

The Tolaeth has one other form—that of a Voice which speaks, in a simple and natural manner, but very significant words. Thus Edward Lloyd, in the parish of Llangurig, was lying very ill, when the people that were with him in his chamber heard a voice near them, but could see no one; nor could they find any one anywhere about the house, to whom the voice might belong. Soon afterwards they heard it utter, so distinctly that it seemed to be in the room where they were, these words, ‘Y mae nenbren y tŷ yn craccio,’ (the upper beam of the house cracketh.) Soon the Voice spoke again, saying, ‘Fe dor yn y man,’ (it will presently break.) And once more it spoke: ‘Dyna fe yn tori,’ (there it breaks.) That moment the sick man gave up the ghost.

John, the son of Watkin Elias Jones, of the parish of Mynyddyslwyn, was one day ploughing in the field, when the oxen rested, and he sent the lad who drove the oxen, to fetch something which he wanted; and while thus alone in the field, he saw a cloud coming across the field to him. When the cloud had come to that part of the field where he was, it stopped, and shadowed the sun from him; and out of the cloud came a Voice, which asked him which of these three diseases he would choose to die of—fever, dropsy, or consumption. Being a man who could give a plain answer to a plain question, he replied that he would rather die of consumption. The lad now returning, he sent him home with the oxen, and then, feeling inclined to sleep, lay down and slept. When he awoke he was ill, and fell by degrees into a consumption, of which he died one year from the day of this warning. He did not tell of this apparition, however, until within six weeks of his death.

V.

One of the most beautiful legends in the Iolo MSS. gives an ancient tale of the Tolaeth which may be thus condensed: A great and wealthy lord, rich in land, houses and gold, enjoying all the luxuries of life, heard a voice proclaim thrice distinctly: ‘The greatest and richest man of this parish shall die to-night.’ At this he was sadly troubled, for he knew that the greatest and richest man of that parish could be no other than he; so he sent for the physician, but made ready for death. Great, however, was his joy when the night passed, the day broke, and he was yet alive. At sunrise the church bell was heard tolling, and the lord sent in haste to know who was dead. Answer came that it was an old blind beggar man, who had asked, and been refused, alms at the great man's gate. Then the lord knew the meaning of the warning voice he had heard: that very great and very rich man had been the poor beggar—his treasures and wealth in the kingdom of heaven. He took the warning wisely to heart, endowed religious houses, relieved all who were in poverty, and when at last he was dying, the voices of angels were heard to sing a hymn of welcome; and he was buried, according to his desire, in the old beggar's grave.

VI.

Of the Teulu, or Goblin Funeral, a death-portent of wide prevalence in Wales, numberless stories are told. This omen is sometimes a form of the Tolaeth, but in itself constitutes an omen which is simple and explicit. A funeral procession is seen passing down the road, and at the same time it is heard. It has no shadowy goblin aspect, but appears to be a real funeral. Examination shows its shadowy nature. Subsequently a real funeral passes the same way, and is recognised as the fulfilment of the omen. The goblin funeral precedes the other sometimes by days, sometimes by weeks. Rees Thomas, a carpenter of Carmarthenshire, passing by night through Rhiw Edwst, near Capel Ywen, heard a stir as of a procession of people coming towards him, walking and speaking; and when they were close to him he felt the touch of an unseen hand upon his shoulder, and a voice saying to him, ‘Rhys bach, pa fodd yr y'ch chwi?’ (my dear Rees, how are you?) A month after, passing that way again, he met a funeral in that very place, and a woman of the company put her hand upon his shoulder and spoke exactly the same Welsh words to him that the invisible spirit had spoken. Rev. Howel Prosser, many years ago curate of Aberystruth, late one

evening saw a funeral procession going down the church lane. Supposing it to be the funeral of a man who had recently died in the upper part of his parish, yet wondering he had not been notified of the burial, he put on his band in order to perform his office over the dead, and hastened to meet the procession. But when he came to it he saw that it was composed of strangers, whom he had never seen before. Nevertheless, he laid his hand on the bier, to help carry the corpse, when instantly the whole vanished, and he was alone; but in his hand he found the skull of a dead horse. ‘Mr. Prosser was my schoolmaster, and a right honest man,’ says Edmund Jones, who is responsible for this story, as well as for the ensuing: Isaac William Thomas, who lived not far from Hafodafel, once met a Goblin Funeral coming down the mountain toward Llanhiddel church. He stood in a field adjoining the highway, and leaned against the stone wall. The funeral came close to the other side of the wall, and as the bier passed him he reached forth his hand and took off the black veil which was over the bier. This he carried to his home, where many people saw it. ‘It was made of some exceeding fine stuff, so that when folded it was a very little substance, and very light.’ That he escaped being hurt for this bold act was long the marvel of the parish; but it was believed, by their going aside to come so near him, that the goblins were willing he should do as he did.

An old man who resided near Llanllwch church, in Carmarthenshire, used to assert in the most solemn manner that he had seen the Teulu going to church again and again. On a certain evening hearing one approaching, he peeped over a wall to look at it. The persons composing the procession were all acquaintances of his, with the exception of one who stood apart from the rest, gazing mournfully at them, and who appeared to be a stranger. Soon afterwards there was a real burying, and the old man, determined to see if there would be in the scene any resemblance to his last Teulu, went to the churchyard and waited. When the procession arrived, all were there as he had seen them, except the stranger. Looking about him curiously, the old man was startled by the discovery that he was himself the stranger! He was standing on the identical spot where had stood the man he did not recognise when he saw the Teulu. It was his own ghost.

VII.

The death portent called Cwn Annwn, or Dogs of Hell, is a pack of hounds which howl through the air with a voice frightfully disproportionate to their size, full of a wild sort of lamentation. There is a tradition that one of them once fell on a tombstone, but no one was able to secure it. A peculiarity of these creatures is that the nearer they are to a man the less loud their voice sounds, resembling then the voice of small beagles, and the farther off they are the louder is their cry. Sometimes a voice like that of a great hound is heard sounding among them—a deep hollow voice, as if it were the voice of a monstrous bloodhound. Although terrible to hear, and certain portents of death, they are in themselves harmless. ‘They have never been known,’ says a most respectable authority, ‘to commit any mischief on the persons of either man or woman, goat, sheep, or cow.’ Sometimes they are called Cwn y Wybr, or Dogs of the Sky, but the more sulphurous name is the favourite one. They are also sometimes called Dogs of the Fairies. Their origin in fairyland is traced to the famous mabinogi of Pwyll, Prince of Dyfed; but in that fascinating tale of enchantment their right to be called Cwn Annwn is clearly set forth, for they are there the hounds of a King of Annwn. There are several translations of this mabinogi in existence, and its popularity in South Wales is great, for the villages, vales, and streams mentioned in it are familiar to residents in Pembroke, Carmarthen, and Cardigan shires. Pwyll, the Prince, was at Narberth, where was his chief palace, when he went one day to a wood in Glyn Cych. Here 'he sounded his horn and began to enter upon the chase, following his dogs and separating from his companions. And as he was listening to the cry of his pack, he could distinctly hear the cry of another pack, different from that of his own, and which was coming in an opposite direction. He could also discern an opening in the woods towards a level plain; and as his pack was entering the skirt of the opening he perceived a stag before the other pack, and about the middle of the glade the pack in the rear coming up and throwing the stag on the ground. Upon this he fixed his attention on the colour of the pack, without recollecting to look at the stag: and of all the hounds in the world he had ever seen he never saw any like them in colour. Their colour was a shining clear white, with red ears; and the whiteness of the dogs and the redness of their ears were equally conspicuous.' They were the hounds of Arawn, a crowned king in the land of Annwn, the shadow-land of Hades.

The Cwn Annwn are sometimes held to be the hell-hounds which hunt through the air the soul of the wicked man, the instant it quits the body—a truly terrific idea to the vulgar mind. The Prophet Jones has several accounts of them: Thomas Phillips, of Trelech parish, heard them with the voice of the great dog sounding among them, and noticed that they followed a course that was never followed by funerals, which surprised him very much, as he had always heard that the Dogs of the Sky invariably went the same way that the corpse was to follow. Not long after a woman from an adjoining parish died at Trelech, and being carried to her own parish church to be buried, her corpse did actually pass the same way in which the spirit dogs had been heard to hunt. Thomas Andrew, of the parish of Llanhiddel, heard them one night as he was coming home. ‘He heard them coming towards him, though he saw them not.’ Their cry grew fainter as they drew near him, passed him, and louder again as they went from him. They went down the steeps towards the river Ebwy. And Thomas Andrew was ‘a religious man, who would not have told an untruth for fear or for favour.’

VIII.

No form of superstition has had a wider popularity than this of spiritual hunting dogs, with which was usually connected in olden time the wild huntsman, a personage who has dropped quite out of modern belief, at least in Wales. In France this goblin was called Le Grand Veneur, and hunted with his dogs in the forests of Fontainebleau; in Germany it was Hackelberg, who sold himself to the devil for permission to hunt till doomsday. In Britain it was King Arthur who served as the goblin huntsman. Peasants would hear the cry of the hounds and the sounding of the horns, but the huntsman was invisible. When they called out after him, however, the answer came back: ‘We are King Arthur and his kindred.’ Mr. Baring-Gould, in giving an account of the myth of Odin, the Wild Huntsman, who rides over the forests by night on a white horse, with his legion of hell-hounds, seems to ascribe the superstition to the imagination of a belated woodcutter frightened by the wind in the tree-tops. William Henderson presumes the belief in the Wild Huntsman's pack, which prevails in the North of England, to come from the strange unearthly cries uttered by wild fowl on their passage southward, and which sound like the

yelping of dogs. These natural phenomena have not served, however, to keep the old belief alive in Wales.

That the Cwn Annwn are descendants of the wish-hound of Hermes, hardly admits of doubt. The same superstition prevails among all Aryan peoples, with details differing but little. The souls of the dying are carried away by the howling winds, the dogs of Hermes, in the ancient mythology as in surviving beliefs; on this follows the custom of opening the windows at death, so that the released soul may escape. In Devonshire they say no soul can escape from the house in which its body dies, unless all the locks and bolts are opened. In China a hole is made in the roof for a like purpose. The early Aryan conception of the wind as a howling dog or wolf speeding over the house-tops caused the inmates to tremble with fear, lest their souls should be called to follow them. It must be constantly borne in mind that all these creatures of fancy were more or less interchangeable, and the god Hermes was at times his own dog, which escorted the soul to the river Styx. The winds were now the maruts, or spirits of the breeze, serving Indra, the sky-god; again they were the great psychopomp himself. The peasant who to-day tells you that dogs can see death enter the house where a person is about to die, merely repeats the idea of a primeval man whose ignorance of physical science was complete.

CHAPTER IX.

The Corpse Candle—Its Peculiarities—The Woman of Caerau—Grasping a Corpse Candle—The Crwys Candle—Lights issuing from the Mouth—Jesting with the Canwyll Corph—The Candle at Pontfaen—The Three Candles at Golden Grove—Origin of Death-Portents in Wales—Degree of Belief prevalent at the Present Day—Origin of Spirits in General—The Supernatural—The Question of a Future Life.

I.

Perhaps the most picturesque of the several death-omens popular in Wales is the Canwyll Corph, or Corpse Candle. It is also, according to my observation, the most extensively believed in at the present day. Its details are varied and extremely interesting. The idea of a goblin in the form of a lighted tallow candle is ludicrous enough, at first sight; and indeed I know several learned Welsh gentlemen who venture to laugh at it; but the superstition grows more and more grim and less risible the better one becomes acquainted with it. It is worth noting here that the canwyll, or candle, is a more poetic thing among the Welsh—has a higher literary place, so to speak—than among English-speaking peoples. In the works of their ancient poets the candle is mentioned in passages where we should use the word light or lamp—as in this verse, which is attributed to Aneurin (sixth century):

The best candle for man is prudence.

The candle is the favourite figure for mental guidance among the Welsh; there is no book in the Welsh language so popular as a certain work of religious counsel by a former Vicar of Llandovery, called ‘The Candle of the Cymry.’ The Corpse Candle is always and invariably a death-warning. It sometimes appears as a stately flambeau, stalking along unsupported, burning with a ghastly blue flame. Sometimes it is a plain tallow ‘dip’ in the hand of a ghost, and when the ghost is seen distinctly it is recognised as the ghost of some person yet living, who will now soon die. This, it will

be noticed, is a variation upon the wraith, or Lledrith. Sometimes the goblin is a light which issues from a person's mouth or nostrils. According to the belief of some sections, the size of the candle indicates the age of the person who is about to die, being large when it is a full-grown person whose death is foretold, small when it is a child, still smaller when an infant. Where two candles together are seen, one of which is large and the other small, it is a mother and child who are to die. When the flame is white, the doomed person is a woman; when red, a man.

II.

Among the accounts of the Corpse Candle which have come under my notice none are more interesting than those given me by a good dame whom I encountered at Caerau, near Cardiff. Caerau is a little village of perhaps one hundred souls, crouched at the foot of a steep hill on whose summit are the ancient earthworks of a Roman camp. On this summit also stands the parish church, distinctly visible from Cardiff streets, so ponderous is its square tower against the sky. To walk there is a pleasant stroll from the late Marquis of Bute's statue in the centre of the seaport town. I am thus particular merely for emphasis of the fact that this superstition is not confined to remote and out-of-the-way districts. Caerau is rural, and its people are all poor people, perhaps; but its church is barely three miles from the heart of a busy seaport. In this church I met the voluble Welshwoman who gave me the accounts referred to. One was to this effect: One night her sister was lying very ill at the narrator's house, and she was alone with her children, her husband being in the lunatic asylum at Cardiff. She had just put the children to bed, and had set her candle on the floor preparatory to going to bed herself, when there came a ‘swish’ along the floor, like the rustling of grave-clothes, and the candle was blown out. The room, however, to her surprise, remained glowing with a feeble light as from a very small taper, and looking behind her she beheld ‘old John Richards,’ who had been dead ten years. He held a Corpse Candle in his hand, and he looked at her in a chill and steadfast manner which caused the blood to run cold in her veins. She turned and woke her eldest boy, and said to him, ‘Don't you see old John Richards?’ The boy asked ‘Where?’ rubbing his eyes. She pointed out the ghost, and the boy was so frightened at sight of it that he cried out ‘O wi! O Dduw! I

wish I may die!’ The ghost then disappeared, the Corpse Candle in its hand; the candle on the floor burned again with a clear light, and the next day the sick sister died.

Another account ran somewhat thus: The narrator's mother-in-law was ill with a cancer of the breast. ‘Jenny fach,’ she said to the narrator one night, ‘sleep by me—I feel afraid.’ ‘Hach!’ said Jenny, thinking the old woman was foolishly nervous; but she stayed. As she was lying in bed by the side of her mother-in-law, she saw at the foot of the bed the faint flame of a Corpse Candle, which shed no light at all about the room; the place remained as dark as it was before. She looked at it in a sort of stupor for a short time, and then raised herself slowly up in bed and reached out to see if she could grasp the candle. Her fingers touched it, but it immediately went out in a little shower of pale sparkles that fell downward. At that moment her mother-in-law uttered a groan, and expired.

‘Do you know Thomas Mathews, sir?’ she asked me; ‘he lives at Crwys now, but he used to live here at Caerau.’ ‘Crwys?’ I repeated, not at once comprehending. ‘Oh, you must know Crwys, sir; it's just the other side of Cardiff, towards Newport.’ ‘Can you spell it for me?’[108] The woman blushed. ‘'Deed, sir,’ said she, ‘I ought to be a scholar, but I've had so much trouble with my old man that I've quite forgot my spellin'.’ However, the story of Thomas Mathews was to the effect that he saw a Corpse Candle come out of his father's mouth and go to his feet, and away a bit, then back again to the mouth, which it did not exactly enter, but blended as it were with the sick man's body. I asked if the candle was tallow at any point in its excursion, to which I was gravely answered that it was the spirit of tallow. The man died not long after, in the presence of my informant, who described the incident with a dramatic force and fervour peculiarly Celtic, concluding with the remark: ‘Well, well, there's only one way to come into the world, but there's a many ways to go out of it.’

The light issuing from the mouth is a fancy frequently encountered. In the ‘Liber Landavensis’ it is mentioned that one day as St. Samson was celebrating the holy mysteries, St. Dubricius with two monks saw a stream of fire to proceed glittering from his mouth. In old woodcuts, the souls of the dying are represented as issuing from the mouth in the form of small human figures; and the Tyrolese peasants still fancy the soul is seen coming out of the mouth of a dying man like a little white cloud. From the

mouth of a patient in a London hospital some time since the nurses observed issuing a pale bluish flame, and soon after the man died. The frightened nurses—not being acquainted with the corpse-candle theory of such things—imagined the torments of hell had already begun in the still living body. A scientific explanation of the phenomenon ascribed it to phosphuretted hydrogen, a result of incipient decomposition.

[108] It is pronounced Croo-iss.

III.

It is ill jesting with the Corpse Candle. Persons who have endeavoured to stop it on its way have come severely to grief thereby. Many have been struck down where they stood, in punishment of their audacity, as in the case of William John, a blacksmith of Lanboydi. He was one night going home on horseback, when he saw a Corpse Candle, and his natural caution being at the moment somewhat overcome by potables, he resolved to go out of his way to obstruct its passage. As the candle drew near he saw a corpse upon a bier, the corpse of a woman he knew, and she held the candle between her forefingers, and dreadfully grinned at him. Then he was struck from his horse, and lay in the road a long time insensible, and was ill for weeks thereafter. Meantime, the woman whose spectral corpse he had seen, died and was buried, her funeral passing by that road.

A clergyman's son in Carmarthenshire, (subsequently himself a preacher,) who in his younger days was somewhat vicious, came home one night late from a debauch, and found the doors locked. Fearing to disturb the folk, and fearing also their reproaches and chidings for his staying out so late, (as many a young fellow has felt before and since,) he went to the man-servant, who slept in an out-room, as is sometimes the custom in Welsh rural districts. He could not awake the man-servant, but while standing over him, he saw a small light issue from the servant's nostrils, which soon became a Corpse Candle. He followed it out. It came to a foot-bridge which crossed a rivulet. Here the young man became inspired with the idea of trying an experiment with the Corpse Candle. He raised the end of the foot-bridge off the bank, and watched to see what the ghostly light would do. When it came to the rivulet it seemed to offer to go over, but hesitated, as if loth to cross except upon the bridge. So the young man put the bridge back in its place, and stayed to see how the candle would act. It

came on the bridge, and as it passed the young man it struck him, as with a handkerchief. But though the blow was thus light and phantom-like, it doubled the young man up and left him a senseless heap on the ground, where he lay till morning, when he recovered and went home. It is needless to add that the servant died.

IV.

Morris Griffith was once schoolmaster in the parish of Pontfaen, in Pembrokeshire, but subsequently became a Baptist preacher of the Gospel. He tells this story: 'As I was coming from a place called Tre-Davydd, and was come to the top of the hill, I saw a great light down in the valley, which I wondered at; for I could not imagine what it meant. But it came to my mind that it was a light before a burying, though I never could believe before that there was such a thing. The light which I saw then was a very red light, and it stood still for about a quarter of an hour in the way which went towards Llanferch-Llawddog church. I made haste to the other side of the hill, that I might see it farther; and from thence I saw it go along to the churchyard, where it stood still for a little time and entered into the church. I remained waiting to see it come out, and it was not long before it came out, and went to a certain part of the churchyard, where it stood a little time, and then vanished out of my sight. A few days afterwards, being in school with the children about noon, I heard a great noise overhead, as if the top of the house was coming down. I ran out to see the garret, and there was nothing amiss. A few days afterwards, Mr. Higgon of Pontfaen's son died. When the carpenter came to fetch the boards to make the coffin, (which were in the garret,) he made exactly such a stir, in handling the boards in the garret, as was made before by some spirit, who foreknew the death that was soon to come to pass. In carrying the body to the grave, the burying stood where the light had stood for about a quarter of an hour, because there was some water crossing the way, and the people could not go over it without wetting their feet, therefore they were obliged to wait till those that had boots helped them over. The child was buried in that very spot of ground in the churchyard, where I saw the light stop after it came out of the church. This is what I can boldly testify, having seen and heard what I relate—a thing which before I could not believe.'

Joshua Coslet, before mentioned in these pages, suddenly met a Corpse Candle as he was going through Heol Bwlch y Gwynt, (Windgap Lane) in Llandilo Fawr parish. It was a small light when near him, but increased as it went farther from him. He could easily see that there was some dark shadow passing along with the candle, and the shadow of a man carried it, holding it ‘between his three forefingers over against his face.’ He might perhaps have seen more, but he was afraid to look too earnestly upon it. Not long after, a burying passed through Heol Bwlch y Gwynt. Another time he saw the likeness of a candle carried in a skull. ‘There is nothing unlikely or unreasonable in either of these representations,’ says the Prophet Jones, their historian.

A Carmarthenshire tradition relates that one day, when the coach which runs between Llandilo and Carmarthen was passing by Golden Grove, the property of the Earl of Cawdor, three Corpse Candles were observed on the surface of the water gliding down the stream which runs near the road. All the passengers saw them. A few days after, some men were about crossing the river near there in a coracle, when one of them expressed his fear at venturing, as the river was flooded, and he remained behind. Thus the fatal number crossed the river—three—three Corpse Candles having foretold their fate; and all were drowned.

V.

Tradition ascribes the origin of all these death-portents to the efforts of St. David. This saint appears to have been a great and good man, and a zealous Catholic, who, as a contemporary of the historical Arthur, is far enough back in the dim past to meet the views of romantic minds. And a prelate who by his prayers and presence could enable King Arthur to overthrow the Saxons in battle, or who by his pious learning could single-handed put down the Pelagian heresy in the Cardiganshire synod, was surely strong enough to invoke the Gwrach y Rhibyn, the Cyhyraeth, the Corpse Candle, and all the dreadful brood. This the legend relates he did by a special appeal to Heaven. Observing that the people in general were careless of the life to come, and could not be brought to mind it, and make preparation for it, St. David prayed that Heaven would give a sign of the immortality of the soul, and of a life to come, by a presage of death. Since that day, Wales, and particularly that part of Wales included in the

bishopric of St. David, has had these phantoms. More materialistic minds consider these portents to be a remainder of those practices by which the persecuted Druids performed their rites and long kept up their religion in the land which Christianity had claimed: a similar origin, in fact, is here found for goblin omens as for fairies.

That these various portents are extensively believed in at the present day there cannot be a doubt; with regard to the most important of them, I am able to testify with the fullest freedom; I have heard regarding them story after story, from the lips of narrators whose sincerity was expressed vividly in face, tones, and behaviour. The excited eye, the paling cheek, the bated breath, the sinking voice, the intense and absorbed manner—familiar phenomena in every circle where ghost stories are told—evidenced the perfect sincerity, at least, of the speakers.

It is unnecessary here to repeat, what I for my own part never forget, nor, I trust, does the reader, that Wales is no exception to the rest of the world in its credulity. That it is more picturesque is true, and it is also true that there is here an unusual amount of legend which has not hitherto found its way into books. Death-omens are common to all lands; even in America, there are tales of the banshee, imported from Ireland along with the sons of that soil. In one recent case which came under my notice the banshee belonged to a Cambridgeshire Englishman. This was at Evansville, Indiana, and the banshee had appeared before the deaths of five members of a family, the last of whom was the father. His name was Feast, and the circumstances attending the banshee's visits were gravely described in a local journal as a matter of news. Less distinguished death-portents are common enough in the United States. That the Cambrian portents are so picturesque and clearly defined must be considered strong testimony to the vivid imagination of the Welsh. Figures born of the fancy, as distinguished from creatures born of the flesh, prove their parentage by the vagueness of their outlines. The outlines of the Cyhyraeth and the Gwrach y Rhibyn sometimes run into and mingle with each other, and so do those of the Tolaeth and the Goblin Funeral; but the wonder is they are such distinct entities as they are.

VI.

To say that all the visible inhabitants of the mundane spirit-world are creatures of the disordered human liver, is perhaps a needless harshness of statement. The question of a future life is not involved in this subject, nor raised by the best writers who are studying it; but, religious belief quite apart, it remains to be proved that spirits of a supernatural world have any share in the affairs of a world governed by natural law. A goblin which manifests itself to the human eye, it seems to me, becomes natural, by bowing before the natural laws which rule in optics. Yet believers in ghosts find no difficulty in this direction; the word ‘supernatural’ covers a multitude of sins. ‘What is the supernatural?’ asks Disraeli, in ‘Lothair.’ ‘Can there be anything more miraculous than the existence of man and the world? anything more literally supernatural than the origin of things?’

Surely, in this life, nothing! The student who endeavours to govern his faith by the methods of science asks no more of any ghost that ever walked the earth, than that it will prove itself a reality. Man loves the marvellous. The marvels of science, however, do not melt away into thin air on close examination. They thrive under the severest tests, and grow more and more extraordinary the more they are tried. The spectroscope and the radiometer are more wonderful than any ‘supernatural’ thing yet heard of. Transportation through the air in the arms of a spirit is a clear impossibility; but it is less wonderful than the every-day feats of electricity in our time, the bare conception of which would have filled Plato and Aristotle with awe.

The actual origin of the phantoms of the spirit-world is to be found in the lawless and luxuriant fancy of primeval man. The creatures of this fancy have been perpetuated throughout all time, unto our own day, by that passionate yearning in men for continued life and love, which is ineradicable in our nature. Men will not, they can not, accept the doubt which plunges an eternal future into eternal darkness, and separates them for ever from the creatures of their love. Hence, when the remorseless fact of Death removes those creatures, they look, with a longing which is indescribably pathetic, into the Unknown where their beloved have gone, and strive to see them in their spirit-life.

On this verge the finite mind must pause; to question that life is to add a terrible burden to all human woe; it need not be questioned. But to question the power of anything in that life to manifest itself to man

through natural law, is to do what science has a right to do. ‘The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing . . . neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.’

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